

Photoshop® creative

The only monthly
Adobe® Photoshop®
dedicated magazine

Inside

Essential tool guides

Learn the ins and outs of vital Photoshop tools



Epson Stylus Photo R340

High-quality photo prints at an affordable price



Abstract art

Create one abstract background that has multiple uses

Understand resolution
How to resize images without losing quality

Multiple choice
Use the Variations for supreme colour control

45 pages of creative tutorials inside

Master montages

Great techniques for presenting your photos in exciting ways

Free CD-ROM!

- 65 Quality photographs
- Creative plug-ins (PC only)
- Beautiful brush sets
- Lots of textures
- and much more



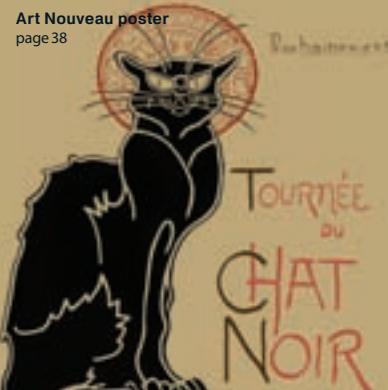


Welcome

A glimpse
of what's in
store this
issue...

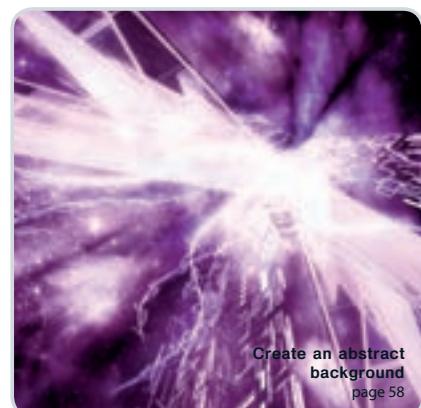


Transform an object's shape
page 48

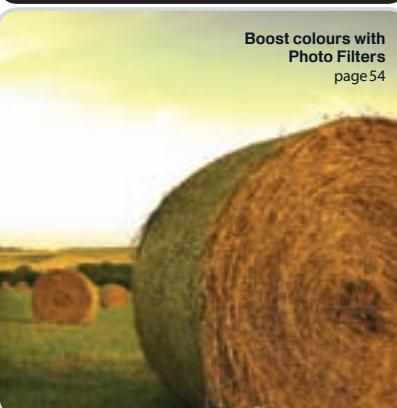


Mission Statement

Here at *Photoshop Creative*, we promise to always give you the best selection of resources to help improve your Photoshop skills. Whether it's in-depth guides to tools and techniques, or showing how to create a work of digital art, we'll make sure the information you get is accurate and informative. We want you to get the optimum Photoshop experience, and have as much fun using the program as we do putting the magazine together.



Create an abstract
background
page 58



Boost colours with
Photo Filters
page 54



We've all heard the old adage size matters, and this really is the case when it comes to image resolution. But how many of you find yourself dozing off whenever you try and work out how to resize your images without waving goodbye to pristine resolution and image quality? We've taken a deep breath and dived into the murky world of resolution and resizing images with our special feature on page 18. If you've ever had problems with your images, turn here for some swift enlightenment.

But the title of this magazine isn't Photoshop Technical – it's *Photoshop Creative!* So in addition to essential facts about the program, we have a healthy dose of inspirational tutorials that will extend your artistic vision. Fans of our regular digital painting series should turn to page 38 where we look at how to re-create an Art Nouveau poster and there's some image trickery happening on page 48, where we illustrate how the Liquify tool can transform an object's shape. There's also an excellent tutorial on designing an invitation (page 66) and an at-a-glance look at all the Photo Filter options.

Until next time...



Jo Cole **Editor**
jo.cole@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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The latest creative news



This is the part of the magazine where we alert you to products or services that will boost your imagination

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Exhibit

Artist showcase



We want to see what images you've produced, so send them in to us and they might appear in this section

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Advice centre

Your questions answered



Common Photoshop problems solved and the best online destinations for tutorials and advice



07



18 Get to grips with resolution

Learn about image resolution and ensure you never suffer from pixelated photos again



81

Creative reviews

Spend some money...



Be it cameras, printers, software or books, this section is where we examine products to help you get creative



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On the CD

More free resources



Each issue comes with a free CD-ROM packed with resources, add-ons and tutorial resource files

Skills
tutorials

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Present your photos in a more interesting way using this great technique

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Add a few filters to your lacklustre photos and bring them back to life

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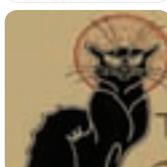
Build up a stunning background that can be used for many purposes

66 Use patterns to create an invitation

Make a bespoke invite and learn about patterns and text to boot!

70 Cool plug-ins: FocalBlade

Sharpen up fuzzy photos with the FocalBlade plug-in



Technical tutorials

Understand your software

36 Focus on: Render filters

There's a multitude of effects to be found in this filter range, and you can get the skinny on what does what here

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Use this command for supreme colour control

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Use this Brush palette setting to completely alter the properties of a brush

64 Focus on: Transform tools

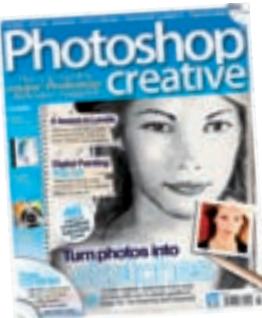
Warp, scale and manipulate files with these

Creative Forum

Write to us with your quips, questions or quirks. Whatever your Photoshop experience, we want to hear from you

Girl power

As a self-taught amateur Photoshop addict, I have failed miserably to find a Photoshop class in my area, I was beginning to despair. I have tried the local camera club who run a class one evening a week but it took the non-techie guy 45 mins to get the projector connected to his PC on the evening I tried, then he spent the rest of the evening showing us his pictures. The advanced digital imaging class at the local college has been cancelled three times due to lack of student. Feeling very depressed after the last phone call from the college, telling me the course was cancelled yet again, I walked into my newsagents to purchase a much needed chocolate fix and browsed the PC magazine shelves while waiting to pay. Imagine my delight when I spotted your issue five. I almost ran to the checkout to purchase it. Since then I haven't looked back.



Live and learn with Photoshop Creative!

The amazing contents included an understandable explanation of levels. And to top it off I see that the editor is a woman and that features are actually written by other women. Not that I am prejudiced you understand but do you know exactly how difficult it is to find another woman like myself who enjoys dabbling with Photoshop? Most of the women of my acquaintance haven't even heard of it. (I am 52 and live in the rural province of Lincolnshire fens!) Anyway thanks a lot and expect my subscription to arrive any day.

Lorraine Noble

Thank you for your letter Lorraine. Hopefully we can give you enough knowledge so you can run your very own Photoshop course!

Brush hour

Firstly, I'd just like to congratulate you on what, in my humble opinion, is THE best thing since Photoshop itself; clear, precise and brilliantly designed. Thank you very much for this much needed addition to the otherwise grey shelves of WH Smith!

I am a traditional illustrator with extensive knowledge of Photoshop and am currently exploring the endless possibilities of working with my own customised brushes... Since

discovering this six months ago, I have found myself using them nearly all the time; in fact I think I am becoming a 'Brush Bore', to coin a phrase! I love doodling with brushes in between jobs and came up with the attached in a little over 10 minutes this morning. I simply created a tree brush, and used one of the brushes off your latest CD to create the sky and foreground, using a brush with the Blur tool to get the lovely swirl effect, and then simply built up a forest using the Tree Brush I had sketched. Finally I added sunlight by feathering and lightening a selection.

Nick Oldham

No need to apologise about being a brush bore; we love them! If you can't draw,



brushes are perfect for building up images and traditional-looking illustrations. We'll always do our best to hunt down individuals who are doing great things with the humble brush.

What art have you created with brushes? Nick sent us this image – can you do any better?



View from the forum



User: sadiedog
Post: No Illustrator?

I want to know if anyone out there uses Illustrator with Photoshop. I'm interested in the program but want to know more about it before I buy a copy. Can anyone give me a run through of what it does?

User: Trev67
Post: Photo comp

Where people are starting to put their suggestions for good places to take photos, why don't we start posting our images somewhere? We could give each other feedback?

User: pixelpixie
Post: Thanks!

Thank you for your recent interview with deviantART. I had never heard of the site but now go there regularly to get inspired by some of the awesome art and also see what the community is up to. I've just bought my first print from there too, so am looking forward to that arriving.

User: waiter
Post: PC blues

I want to try Lightroom but have a PC. Boo!

A challenge dupe?

I have just received my issue 6 of your wonderful magazine, and feel I have to make a comment regarding the Readers' Challenge. Surely the whole idea of the challenge is to create an image using those supplied by you? I note that on page 18, there is a silver pepper! Search as hard as I can, I see nothing to do with Sydney. Then on page 17 is an American image, from the challenge of issue three! Let's please stick to the task, as given in the current issue, otherwise, we could all send in any picture

we like. Otherwise a fantastic magazine, I will continue with my subscription.

Michael Constable

Because *Photoshop Creative* is sold in various countries, we decided to not impose a deadline on the Readers' Challenge in case some countries received copies quite a time after the original on sale date. We didn't think it would be fair to exclude them just because the mags turned up later. Which is why you might see some older challenges rear their head!



Creative hub

The latest news stories for the Photoshop community

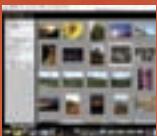
What's hot this month

I'VE GOT A HUMAN IN MY THROAT



The Worth1000 site has released its second book containing optical illusions you can create with Photoshop. The included CD has all 80 images needed for the book's focused, easy-to-follow tutorials

LIGHTROOM BETA 2



Lightroom Beta 2 has been released. Features include the ability to add music to slideshows and cropping or straightening photos. Presently available for Macs, it will eventually support PCs. More at <http://labs.macromedia.com/technologies/lightroom/>

ACRYLIC SANDWICH



No, it's not the latest food or diet fad, but is instead a new product from PhotoArtistry. Images are sandwiched between sheets of acrylic, giving a really effective and pleasing 3D effect. Find out more about the AcrylicSandwich Block on page 14.

TOP STORY

AWARDS

Hand Bath (by Jonathan Steelandt)



Stilts Malibu CA (by Stephen Peacock)



Digital Canvas Awards

NAPP announces winners of first annual worldwide Photoshop competition



The first worldwide Adobe Photoshop competition, the Digital Canvas Awards held by the NAPP, has just announced its winners.

Nearly 600 entries were submitted to the competition. Photoshop users of any level of skill could submit up to three pieces of work, with the opportunity to get their creativity recognised at a global level. Finalists were judged by the NAPP's creative team, who then sent them on to a panel of judges which included some of the best-known names in the Photoshop industry.

The Best of Show award was presented to 'The Day I Looked Up to the Sky and Saw Mucha's Stars' by Amiel Lita Lapuebla of Las Pinas, Philippines. The 11 award categories were very diverse, and included Advertising Design, Landscape Photography, Photo Montage and Photo Restoration. The Best of Show winner has the opportunity to create a cover for a future issue of *Photoshop User*

magazine, the official publication of the NAPP. He also received a trip for two to Paris, where he'll create the cover, and an award package worth \$2,500 that includes gifts from Wacom, Adobe and ColorVision. Other winners received prizes including a Wacom Intuos Tablet, Spyder Screen Calibrator, Adobe CS2 software and two three-day Photoshop World Conference passes.

"We were delighted to see entries from around the globe," said NAPP director, Larry Becker. The National Association of Photoshop Professionals is made up of an award-winning team of experts, and with over 47,000 members, is the world's largest digital imaging association. Felix Nelson, senior art director of *Photoshop User* and *Layers* magazines said, "The level of creativity and talent in the works submitted was mind-blowing, making the selection process no easy task. We judged over 600 creative works, based on three criteria: overall visual impact, the level of complexity of Photoshop techniques, and composition." The response was so great that on 1 December 2006 the

NAPP will again invite Photoshop users to participate in the competition. See the inspired pieces of work from this year's winners at www.digitalcanvasawards.com/winners.php.



Floatilla (by Ciro Marchetti)

TALK TO US! | SEND NEWS STORIES TO ZOE.MUTTER@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK



In the beginning, part 6



Follow the evolution of Photoshop in this regular series



When the betas of Version 3.0 were revealed, some features were poorly documented. The words 'Bass-O-Matic' would occasionally appear in the menu and later mysteriously disappear. Many theories circulated:

Matt Brown, from Adobe's technical support, suggested the purpose was to catch out the people testing the beta versions. If the testers didn't report seeing the words at least once, they hadn't done their

job correctly. A more serious glitch was the discovery that the beta expiration code stated the program would expire on 1 January 1995 – but users could easily solve this by replacing it with a 3.0.1 updaters.

Keep up to date with plug-ins

Plugs 'n Pixels produces plug-ins e-zine

 free plug-ins e-zine detailing the range of Photoshop-compatible plug-ins is available to download at the Plugs 'n Pixels site.

The tutorials in the e-zine are highly informative and provide inspiration for your creative projects. The e-zine, also called Plugs 'n Pixels, is currently on its fourth issue. Each issue comprises of 20 pages of information on the best the plug-in world has to offer – for example Lucis Art, Vertus Fluid Mask and PowerRetouche. The site aims to help



Plugs 'n Pixels will help you with plug-ins

you navigate quickly and easily through the seemingly endless list of creative software and related titles. Featured in the premiere issue of the e-zine was a tutorial about using plug-ins to create a fiery image – the perfect way to liven up designs.

"The goal of the Plugs 'n Pixels site is to help people find their way through the plug-in jungle. We have a working relationship with over 100 different developers, so the site is continually updated with new product information and demonstrations," said Mike Bedford, developer of Plugs 'n Pixels.

Visit www.plugsnpixels.com to check out the e-zine and tutorials for yourself.

IMAGING

Fontastic

Début Publications announces Free?Fonts publication



e mentioned in issue three that Début Publications was producing a book called *99 Silhouettes*. Another project it recently announced is the publication *Free?Fonts* (formerly entitled *The Freeware and Shareware Font Directory*). The book is well into production and will be available online and from selected outlets from March. Further details and preview images will also be available on the Début Publications site. A preview of the cover can already be seen there.

"*Free?Fonts* includes submissions from 18 font foundries and type designers, as well as articles from Mark Simonson, Ray Larabie and Typeindex.org – in addition to a comprehensive directory listing of more than 200 font foundries and type designers," explained Steve Campbell, Managing Director at Début Publications. To complement the



Preview images at www.debutpublications.co.uk

print publications, *Free?Fonts* will also be available as a PDF e-book.

The book includes a foreword by Mark Simonson, articles on Ligature and OpenType, font families and experimental type, and will be available at the Début Publications store from March. Other publications are under development, and Début Publications hopes to bring you news of these projects next month. More at www.debutpublications.co.uk.

Updates...

THIS MONTH IN SHORT

New additions to the world of Photoshop



Mac-compatible FocalBlade

 The Plugin Site has released a Mac OS X version of FocalBlade, the advanced sharpening tool originally only available for Windows. It sharpens photos for screen display and printing, and also creates blur or soft focus on an image. For more info visit www.theplugsites.com.



Photoshop podcast

 You may know Matt Kloskowski from Photoshop TV. Now you can see even more of him by watching the new video podcast, Photoshop Killer Tips, in which he presents great tips every weekday. Subscribe to the podcast episodes, which are all under two minutes long, through iTunes.

EXPOSURE

work seen

GRAFICA

www.computer-grafica.net

This digital artist community has an impressive virtual gallery of images and animations. The space is free for artists to display their work and view others'. The site includes sections dedicated to news, resources and tutorials, and there's a gallery of wallpapers which is open to submissions from anyone.



PORTFOLIOS.COM

www.portfolios.com

Drop by this site if you want to create an online portfolio that can be seen by people worldwide or even if you're looking for an artist. Portfolios.com has helped thousands of creative professionals to find clients and expose their work. The service is not free, but if you're serious about showcasing your work it's worth it.

Get your



Make a date



18-19 APR
5, 19 MAY

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS SUMMITS
Adobe and the Photoshop Elements Techniques newsletter are running free summits on Elements throughout the US. Get more from www.photoshopelementsuser.com.

DEADLINE
20 MARCH

PORTFOLIOS.COM AWARDS
The Portfolios.com Awards Show will showcase outstanding work of 2005 in fields including Graphic Design and Photography. Now accepting entries for 2006 – see www.portfolios.com.

29 MAR
1 APR

ADIM AND PHOTOSHOP TIPS AND TRICKS WORKSHOP
The Art Directors Invitational Master Class is for designers and photographers. Tips and Tricks is being held in CA. Visit [www.adimconference.com](http://adimconference.com).

Two of the best...

PLUG-IN SITES

The best sites for all your plug-in needs



The Plugin Site

www.theplugin.site.com

This site is crammed with Photoshop-compatible plug-ins, reviews, newsletters and discussion boards. This month's Cool Plug-in, FocalBlade, is among many of The Plugin Site's products. Also featured is Plugin Commander, which enables you to organise, apply and convert your plug-ins.



PluginsWorld

www.photoshop.pluginsworld.com

PluginsWorld lists available plug-ins not only for Photoshop but also Illustrator, Acrobat and InDesign. If you're looking for the best plug-ins, check out the most popular plug-ins or updated areas. In-depth descriptions and ratings of each plug-in make this a useful and very thorough site.

COMMUNITY

Take part in the Mass-Art project

Become part of the world's first mass digital painting

The Mass-Art project's goal is to create the world's first mass digital painting. A hundred thousand artists are needed, so visit the site to sign up and submit your piece.

Site translators are also needed to further the project's reach. The aim is to create a painting through a digital interface where people from all over the world participate. There's not a vast amount of artwork on the site at present, so all the more reason to contribute! If successful, the project will have a significant social and artistic value.

To participate, you must register first. When the project's goals have been reached, one single copy of the painting will be created. The Mass-Art website went live in December 2005. Visit the site and see the art as it stands today.

Boris Rogge, the organiser of the project, is a freelance IT consultant. "I've been active on the internet since 1993 and realised that its social potential is massive, so I wanted to do something in that area," he says. "Being a fan of art myself, I came up with the Mass-Art idea. It's a first attempt at creating a community that could produce something beautiful and original. On top of that, the technical complexity of the project is kept limited in order to focus on the social part of the project."

Depending on the project's success, plans for future developments include making the drawing more intuitive and flexible, and extending the project with new possibilities, eg being able to contact people with pixels next to your own, thus creating a virtual pixel network. Get involved at www.mass-art.org.

RESOURCES

Tasty new printing method launched

The AcrylicSandwich Block adds to digital printing solutions

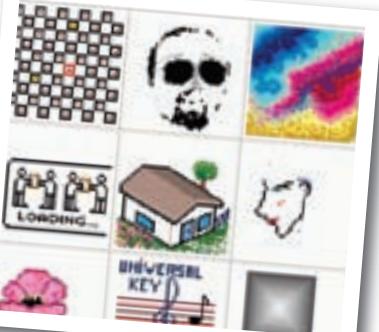
In issue three we featured a competition with PhotoArtistry, offering readers the chance to have work printed on canvas. The company has just announced



the latest addition to its product range, the AcrylicSandwich Block. This picture-mounting method involves printing the image on high-grade glossy paper then sandwiching it between blocks of clear Perspex acrylic.

The block's edges are highly polished and the reflection of the print off the polished edge gives the illusion of a 3D image. This provides a spectacular finish to artwork and photographic images. The thicker the block the better the illusion, but the trade-off is the block's weight. Images up to 1m x 2m can be produced using 12mm and 3mm blocks.

"We've established ourselves as providers of print display solutions for the photographic-art market," said Anne Herbert, Managing Director at PhotoArtistry. For more information, visit www.photoartistry.co.uk.



The team's wish list

Pure material delight...



PANTONE'S HUEY

Pantone has announced the release of huey, a monitor calibration tool for digital photographers wanting a simple solution to maintaining absolute colour and clarity. Developed in partnership with GretagMacbeth and being the size of a marker pen, it's exceptional in format, performance and ease of use.

WE WANT IT BECAUSE...

Huey is the first monitor calibration and colour management tool to adjust your monitor's colour as room lighting changes. It calibrates all types of monitor, LCD, laptop and CRT quickly and easily. You can buy huey (for \$89) at www.pantone.com.





Skilled in traditional and digital art, photography and even video, Hannah Gal is one multi-talented lady. We asked her to share some of her creative expertise with us...

THE STORY BEHIND...

Hannah Gal



Hannah's top tips for creating digital paintings

Learn from the expert

01 The long route makes a richer, deeper piece.

02 Look at history of art books or just go to art or museum websites to be inspired. Better still, go and see the originals.

03 Appreciate the original artist's skill.

04 Get a graphics tablet. You will never look back.

05 Join a forum or two and visit creative sites to see what is new and what others are up to.



ach month Hannah Gal shows us amazing ways of imitating famous painting styles using Photoshop. She is not just recognised for her digital artistic talents, she is also a renowned photographer and filmmaker. Originally coming from a fine art background, Hannah moved on to photography and then progressed to integrate computer technology into the creation of masterpieces. Hannah has gathered an impressive list of clients and exhibitions, both in the United Kingdom and abroad. She has also been featured on BBC, Channel 4, ITV, MTV, Sky and Radio 4. Her shows have also been sponsored by the likes of Wacom, Umax and Nikon. Digital artwork has opened up a new array of creative possibilities and Hannah's work explores them all to the full, combining them with her skills in traditional art.

How did you first begin in digital art?

I am a great believer in new tools as inspiration, technology included. A new brush, a different textured paper or new paints are as inspiring as a new piece of software (or hardware). I was intrigued by the technology but never feel like I chose one over the other. I tend to go with what works best at a certain point in time and flow with it. At the moment digital technology is simply amazing to me and I am still exploring it in many ways. It started with a demo of Photoshop, which interested me. I got a computer and went from there.

What Photoshop feature do you use most frequently?

That is a tricky one to answer but I will give a few favourites. I use a great number of layers. I often reach over 100, as I love the control it offers. I also like the fine control

the Curves provides. The fact I can set points and create my own curve is great. It is more refined than levels.

What do you think is the best method of learning to use Photoshop?

Photoshop is a very comprehensive application and I doubt you could ever master all aspects of it fully. I am discovering new features all the time. The best way is what people consider boring in a way, and that is look at the manual and do tutorials. They present features that the creators of the software know inside out and can make a fundamental difference to the way you work. I also love online forums where you see a question from a user, and the answer right next to it. There are many methods, some excellent and some average, but you can learn from all of them.

What is your advice for creating work using Photoshop?

Experimentation is important as is looking at what others are up to. There is some great work out there and the danger is that when you are busy with yours, you have no time to see it. Don't stick to what you know, but go to the trouble of learning new features when you can.

Are there any other areas of digital art you would still like to explore?

Like most people, I navigate through the personal and what pays the rent. Luckily for me, I thoroughly enjoy the latter. I think it is better to evolve and not just develop the one style everyone recognises you by. This might just mean your creativity is a touch stifled. I would choose the moving and touching subject matter over the purely stylistic and fashionable every time. This, however, is a point open for discussion, as people would

argue that what I do wouldn't strike a chord had it not been contemporary. I think there is a strong distinction between contemporary and fashionable.

What was the best thing about interviewing Thomas Knoll?

It reaffirmed my belief in knowledge and its pursuit. This is a guy who, with his brother, had an interest that took much of his time and effort. They put together a program that has changed the way we work. His vision has affected creative output and the world of photography in a profound way.

How did you get involved with giving talks at the Apple store?

I am in contact with companies like Apple, Adobe, Wacom, Nikon, Fuji, Canon and Corel whose products I use daily. I am inspired by other people's work and input, so I am always offering to share my vision with others. This is one opportunity that was offered to me and I was glad to accept. My next one shall be at the Adobe show in May.



Hannah's digital painting odyssey began in issue one, with her re-creation of Van Gogh's Starry Night



Get to grips with resolution

C

apturing the ideal image isn't just about what you see; several factors play their part in creating your masterpiece.

Central is image resolution – the number of tiny pixels that make up your photos and artwork. Get your resolution right and you're halfway there. Get it wrong and no amount of tweaking in Photoshop is going to rescue your hard work, especially with pixels the size of teenage spots.

You probably know that images are made up of pixels and that these pixels dictate how sharp an image is, or how large it can be printed or viewed. Each pixel in a digital image contains two types of information: levels of colour and brightness, but in a mathematical coded form for the eye to interpret. Think of a mosaic made up of square fragments which only make sense

from a distance and you've pretty much got the idea.

Pixels are arranged in grid formation rather than the more disorganised pattern of a mosaic, but much of the theory is the same: if you tried to create a mosaic of a tree with only a few fragments, it would barely resemble the real thing and would probably look like a few blocks of green for the leaves and a couple of blocks of brown for the trunk. You may be able to make out what the pattern represents, but it is still not a true representation. In the same way, a digital photograph of a tree with only a few pixels available would be barely recognisable.

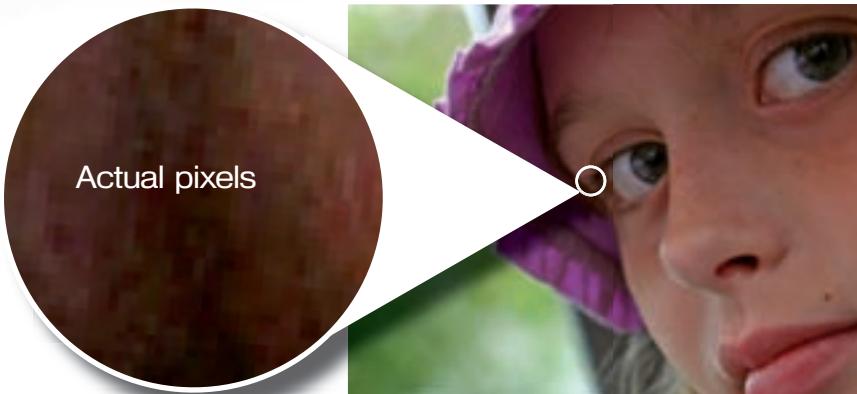
Attempt to scale up low-resolution images in Photoshop, though, and images will appear blocky. You'll start to see distortion and ugly imperfections, fine detail will be lost, sharpness dulled, edges becoming jagged. Photoshop is capable of many

Resolution is the most important part of image creation yet a lot of us are in the dark to how it all works. Nick Spence is here to turn on the light

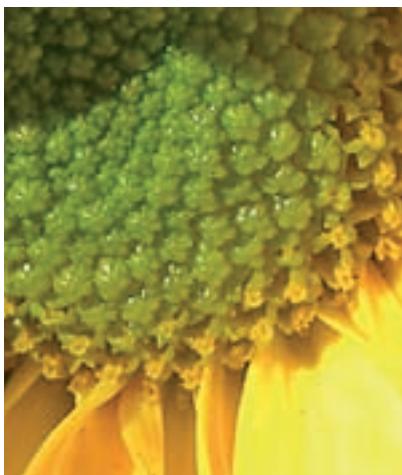
magical things but it can't add to what's not already there. If an image measures 2000 pixels across, that's it. You can fudge things to a certain extent, but you need to be aware of an image's 'true' pixel measurement to have any hope of properly judging its image resolution, clarity and sharpness.

Print resolution is normally measured in inches across the page in a straight line. Dots per inch (dpi) refers to the printing process, while pixels per inch (ppi) refers to the computer display. It sounds complicated and to be fair it can be, especially when screen resolution, camera megapixels and the like are added to the equation. It's been said resolution is one of the most overused and least understood words in Photoshop, and clearly just thinking about it can cause headaches.

So here's a simple equation for you. High resolution = high quality picture = plenty of pixels; low resolution = low quality picture



Zoom into any of your images and you'll be able to see the pixels that make it up. These are what you need to be aware of!



This image has a resolution of 300ppi. Notice the different colours in the pixels and how sharp they are



Here's the same image reduced to 72ppi, but keeping its original physical size. All the pixel definition is lost

= too few pixels. Two popular resolution settings you'll often see mentioned are 72ppi and 300ppi. Both are associated with print but the former has become associated with images displayed on the Internet. Generally the greater the number the better the resolution, but that doesn't always mean that 300ppi is best. The key to making resolution work for you is knowing how many pixels you need for the job you need to do.

Pick a resolution

Take a screen shot of your computer monitor and the image will be saved at 72ppi as standard. The same 72ppi setting applies to many cameras when you import JPEG

"High resolution = high quality picture = plenty of pixels; low resolution = low quality picture = too few pixels"

images. Print your photos at standard sizes set at 72dpi and you won't notice any major problems although you're very much dependent upon the quality of your printer and paper. Web graphics are normally set at

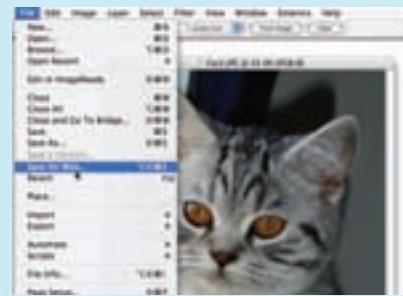
72ppi, which as we'll see, will significantly help create a smooth fast loading site. Smaller 72ppi files also

mean less space taken up on your hard drive. Bigger is not always better; the higher the resolution of an image, the longer it takes to open, edit, save, and print. So 72ppi is adequate for many things but begin to start cropping, enlarging and adding detail and you will soon start to see the limitations of lower resolution images.



Save images for the web

The Save for Web option (File>Save for Web) is a good way of downsizing images for email and web use, but is also a good way of instantly seeing how an image is affected by a decrease in file size.



01 The right view Open up the photo you want to reduce in Photoshop and then go to File>Save for Web. You'll be offered several options to view your image while reducing file size. Select the 2-UP option and you can compare the original image with the scaled down version.



02 Eye on the size The image size is listed at the bottom of the Save for Web workspace, which is where you need to pay attention. You can see the size change as you tweak the settings. Strike a balance between sharpness and clarity and file size.



03 More options Before Save for Web is actually saved, look at the options closer. Click on 4-Up at the top left of your screen to view yet more options side-by-side. If you want a website that loads consistently at a similar speed don't mix and match settings too much.

Tip

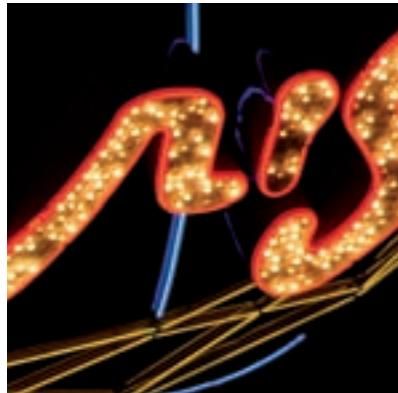


Because Photoshop mainly deals with pixels, it is commonly known as a resolution-dependant program. This means that any resizing is dictated by the pixels. However, there are vector options within Photoshop, which give users the same resolution independent status as someone using Illustrator. Vector files are based on paths and can be scaled up without loss of quality. It's possible to work with type, shape layers and layer clipping paths within Photoshop as you would a vector program, so they offer a lot of freedom when it comes to resizing and resolution.



But if you take things up a notch you will really begin to see how this whole resolution lark works. If you zoom in on two images, one at 72ppi the other at 300ppi, you will notice that the 72ppi image looks soft, lacking in both sharpness and detail. This is because Photoshop has less detail to work on with a 72ppi image. The standard now used by many is 300ppi. If you want to display and sell your own artwork, 300ppi is a good resolution standard to aim for. It's also an ideal resolution if you are likely to crop an image later in Photoshop. So, if in doubt, 300ppi is a good place to start.

And talking of starting, you need to keep resolution in mind when you're creating a new document in Photoshop. In addition to specifying a document's dimensions under

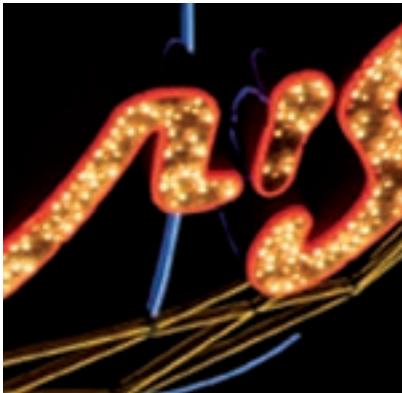


This 300ppi photo has sharp, colourful pixels that give a clear and crisp image

File>New, you can also set the number of pixels. This is useful if you've been given a specific task, a web banner for instance, because you can make sure you have the right size at the correct resolution. Some bitmap graphic programs will default an image to 72ppi but, as we have established,

"If 300ppi produces clean, crisp images, what if all of your pictures are set at 72ppi or some other lower resolution?"

300ppi is a good starting point. Your file size will be significantly bigger but you'll have more pixels to play with. You can always downsize a 300ppi image to 72ppi, say for the internet, later. It's much more problematic to work from a 72ppi image and

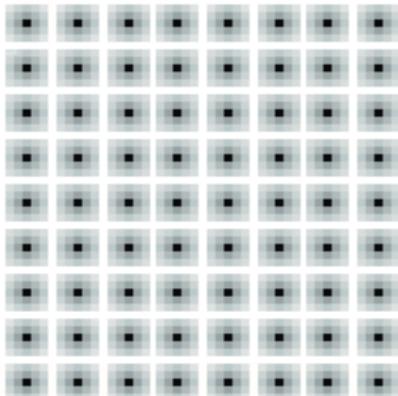


However, this image started as 72ppi and was forced to 300ppi. See how the pixels have lost definition

then scale up to 300ppi, as we shall see a bit later on.

Please sir, I want some more

So, if 300ppi produces clean crisp images, what if all your pictures are set at 72ppi or some other lower resolution setting? Do you only have one chance to get the resolution correct? Well, not quite. There are a number ways to add pixels to your images. Firstly you'll need to check the size of your image. In Photoshop go to Image>Image Size to see the dimensions displayed, as well as size you'll see resolution highlighted. The Image Size dialog box is central to setting resolution and achieving good results in Photoshop. In the dialog box check that pixels/inch is selected; the figure to the left of it will be the current resolution setting. This could be 72ppi or



When an image is forced to have more pixels, Photoshop 'guesses' what colour pixels to add, giving the soft effect



Resize with plug-ins

Ready-made recipes for resolution control

Although Photoshop comes equipped with numerous tools to enhance your images, resolving resolution issues and increasing the size and number of pixels is often best served by third party plug-ins. Here is our pick of the best.



SizeFixer SLR (\$185)
and SizeFixerXL (\$335)

www.fixlerlabs.com

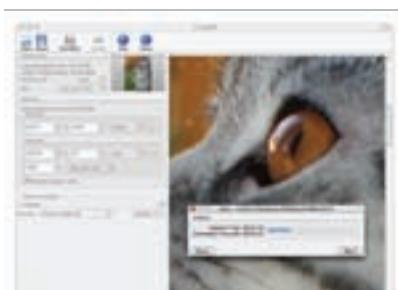
SizeFixer SLR enlarges images up to A1 size, while SizeFixer XL has no limit and can in theory create an image as large as your computer will allow.



pxl SmartScale (\$199.95)

www.ononesoftware.com

This plug-in has been around a while, gaining a reputation for ease of use and pretty decent results. Manufacturers claim users can scale images up to 1600% with no discernible loss in printed quality.



PhotoZoom Professional (129.00Euros)

www.benvista.com

Based on a self-adjusting advanced interpolation method called S-Spline Technology, PhotoZoom Professional analyses the sharpness of the original image, then decides which parts must be enlarged.

300ppi, two popular resolution settings. If 72ppi is shown there are several ways, some more successful than others, to increase those pixels a tad.

Changing resolution is normally referred to as resampling – sizing an image upward or downward. Photoshop either allows you to add pixels (upsampling) as well as reducing size and pixels (downsampling). The latter is less problematic because you are throwing away data, not trying artificially to add to it. Photoshop uses a process called interpolation for resampling the size of an image.

Interpolation adds new pixels to an image based on the colour values of the surrounding pixels. Photoshop in effect tries to guess the missing information from nearby pixels to fill in the gaps. Unfortunately it can't 'guess' exactly where all these extra new pixels should be.

Within the Image Size dialog box of recent versions of Photoshop, you're offered five ways of interpolation. You can default

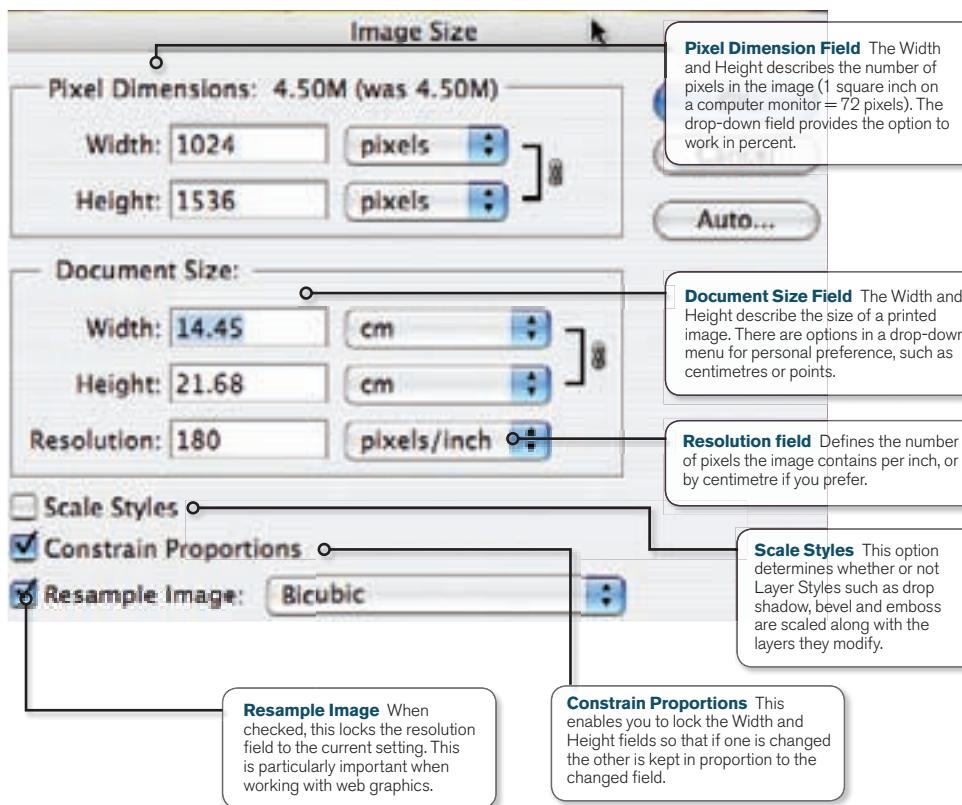
any one of these settings by choosing Preferences>General, and see what they can do over the page. Each is applicable to a certain type of image, so it just takes a bit of getting used to which one is suitable. Always remember that resampling involves changing the pixel dimensions and will always introduce a loss in quality to your images. To see what each part of the Image Size dialog means, check out our annotated image.

In addition to resampling, Photoshop offers resizing as an alternative. The downside of this process – simply doubling the resolution of an image for instance – is that the image is reduced to 25 per cent of its original size. Keep increasing resolution and your image will get smaller and smaller. If you want to see this in action go to Image>Image Size and uncheck the Resample Image box. The more pixels the smaller the size, the less pixels the larger the image. Results look good but you sacrifice size for clarity.



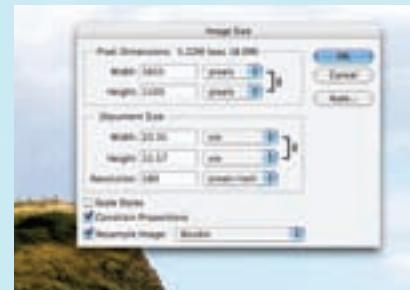
The Image Size dialog

This is your first stop when you need to alter an image's size or resolution and has lots of options that will help you get the results you want without descending into a pixelated horror

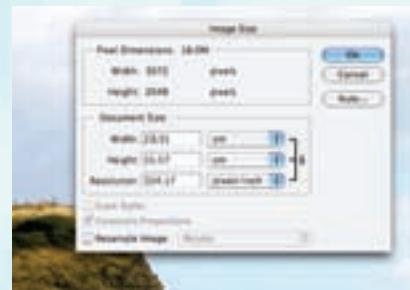


Use the Image Size dialog

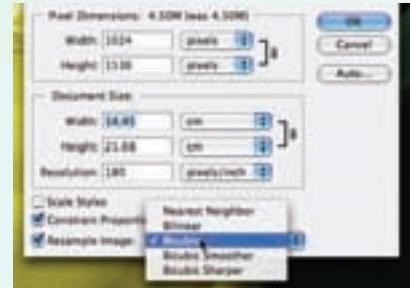
Photoshop guru and author of numerous essential guides, Deke McClelland, regards the Image Size dialog box as possibly the most essential command in all of Photoshop. Found under Image>Image Size your image resizing days start here!



01 Get your bearings When you open the dialog box, you have various options for how the image is treated. To change the output dimensions, but keep the resolution at its original settings, you need to make sure the Resample box is checked.



02 Resolution be damned If you want the resolution to change in accordance to how the image dimensions are altered, then make sure the Resample Image is unchecked. All three boxes in Document Size will now be linked and work in harmony.



03 The best tool for the job If your version of Photoshop has the five interpolation options, try a couple of them out to see which one works best for your particular needs and type of image.

File formats explained

Photoshop offers many file formats, which can also have a hand in the subject of resolution. Here's what they all mean...

JPEG

(Joint Photographic Experts Group) – most common of all file formats. Positives are smaller files and wide acceptance, big negative it's a 'lossy' format as image compression is used to decrease file size. Frequent editing and re-editing of JPEG results in loss of detail and general softening.

TIFF

(Tagged Image File Format) – offers 'lossless' compression but at a price, much bigger file sizes. Versatile and adaptable the TIFF produces excellent results and can include useful additional data within the image header or tags. Some cameras now shoot TIFF files and the format is often favoured over JPEG by professionals starting life as a format for scanning images.

EPS

(Encapsulated PostScript) – EPS is a file format associated with desktop publishing programs. When you open an EPS file in Photoshop before the rasterised image is displayed, you can set both size and resolution, having some control how image will look.

GIF

(Graphic Interchange Format) – limited to an 8-bit palette or 256 colours, GIF images are ideal for the web when speed and ease of loading is of essence. GIF images employ lossless data compression so that the file size can be reduced without degrading the visual quality. Due to the limited palette they do not best showcase photographs or artwork.

PNG

(Portable Network Graphics) - pronounced 'ping' or spelt out, PNG uses a non-patented lossless data compression method known as deflation. Images can be edited without many of the problems associated with 'lossy' formats.

PSD

(Photoshop Document) – allows great control over images especially when adding layers, masks and clipping paths.

PDF

(Portable Document Format) – offers great portability and a widespread user base. Associated initially with visions of a 'paperless office' PDF files are device independent and resolution independent meaning great compatibility. What you see onscreen is pretty much what others will see so a PDF is a recommend way to showcase your work especially via email.

Print size and resolution

The interpolation options in the Image Size dialog give you more control when dealing with resolution and allow you to get away with some tweaks. Here we've increased a 72ppi image to 300ppi using the different methods on offer.



Nearest neighbour: the simplest interpolation method that offers smoother results



Resampling down can remove artifacts, scanning defects, photo grain and general imperfections while producing excellent overall results. As discovered previously it can be beneficial to scan images as large as possible and resample down. Photoshop allows you to reduce an image with relative ease; made easier still by advances introduced in Photoshop CS. When



Bilinear: calculates new pixels by reading the horizontal and vertical neighbouring ones

going into Preferences>General in Photoshop remembering to quit the application before those changes can be applied.

Pixel pratfalls

Stuffing extra pixels into an image won't result in instant gratification and stunning pin sharp results. The human eye has problems seeing beyond an average 267ppi anyway, so all those extra pixels will be lost to the viewer. Extra pixels will appear as a continuous tone, so a 300ppi standard should appeal to even the most discerning eye. Don't forget that unwanted pixels can also mean much fatter files that will hog precious space on your hard drive.

One amusing error you may encounter when looking at resolution and particularly the Image Size dialog box for the first time is seeing images stretch and squish as you change resolution settings. Make sure that the Constrain Proportions option is ticked otherwise you'll be altering height and width independent of each other. With Constrain Proportions ticked changing one will also

"Resampling down can remove artifacts, scanning defects, photo grain and general imperfections while producing excellent results"

you want to reduce an image go to the Image>Image Size menu. Click on Resample Image and choose Bicubic Sharper from the drop-down menu. Many, including leading Photoshop gurus, have found this gives good consistent results when resampling down. If you forget to use Bicubic Sharper each time, you can set it as default. As a general tip you can set image interpolation preferences by



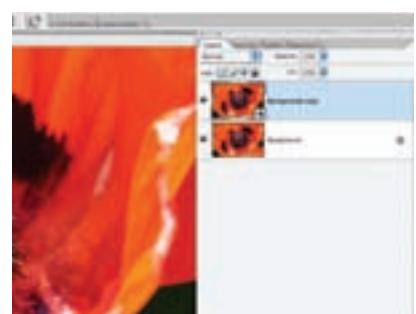
Smart Objects in Photoshop CS2

All the advantages of vector

Smart Objects, introduced in Adobe Photoshop CS2, don't really seem to get the attention they deserve. They effectively allow you to perform non-destructive scaling, rotating, and warping of raster and vector graphics. Amazingly you can shrink and then enlarge a graphic with no loss of detail (as long as you don't go larger than the original size). Smart Objects also enable you to 'tag' a layer, and it

instantly becomes immune to resampling and the damage that scaling and other transformation effects can inflict on your precious pictures.

If you want to turn a layer into a smart object, highlight the layer, and go to Layer>Smart Objects>Group into Smart Objects. You will notice a small icon appear in your Layers palette. All this does is indicate to you that the layer has changed.





Bicubic: Photoshop guesses new pixels by examining the vertical, horizontal and diagonal neighboring pixels



Bicubic smoother: works very well if you need to upsize an image by a few pixels



Bicubic sharper: retains detail and sharpness even when you're removing pixels

change the other, images will grow or shrink in perfect proportion.

Remember, while many people may think in centimetres and not inches, do all you can to not confuse them in Photoshop. The standard is pixels per inch not pixels per centimetres; you'll have huge files if you start working in such a high image resolution. When you set your document size in Photoshop make sure that resolution is correctly displayed. It won't look professional if you're asked to provide images at 300ppi and give them something else entirely.

Other resizing tools

The Transform tool, found under Edit>Transform, allows you to move, scale, rotate, skew, distort, and flip your images (particularly photographs) to great effect once the layer is active. Much fun is to be had distorting the faces of loved ones. This, however, does have an element of the destructive about it. The Transform tools work by resampling the layer to achieve the desired quirky effect. This means that you

are in effect damaging your layer with each transformation, because once scaled down, a resampled image can never fully recover its original quality.

The Scale Tool found under Edit>Transform>Scale gives you some scope to scale images without touching the Image Size dialog box. Results are generally poor, though, and when all's said and done it's

"If your images look soft due to lack of pixels and poor resolution, sharpening can rescue some of our hard work"

probably best left alone.

Some documents such as native Adobe Illustrator files, EPS and PDF formatted files will need to be rasterised before you can work on them in Photoshop. Here again you must consider resolution when converting vectors to bitmap pixel-based images. Photoshop will display a dialog box that lets you specify resolution and by default it's set at 72ppi. You

might want to change this to 300ppi for better clarity.

Possible fixes

If your images look soft due to lack of pixels and poor resolution, sharpening can rescue some of your hard work. It's best performed as the last process before print or output. Photoshop has several tools; Unsharp

Mask, and the new Smart Sharpen, to assist you. Apply sharpening filters and Photoshop will increase the contrast between neighbouring pixels.

The best solution to working with resolution is to get it right at the beginning. If in doubt, make sure you have more pixels than you could ever need. Removing pixels and reducing resolution is a no-brainer, but things get a tricky when you start trying to add information back in. Once you know how an image is constructed, though, you will find it easier to figure out how to get the most from it in Photoshop.

Tip



Photoshop will scale an image during the printing process. Select File>Print with Preview. In the Print with Preview dialog box, change the Height or Width option under Scaled Print Size to create a customised print size. You can specify values or enter a percentage in the Scale option box. You can increase resolution by lowering the size of the printed image. Select higher values and the reverse will happen. This option also allows you to print a small section of your image; ideal for proofing. When it comes to outputting work, certain print sizes require certain pixel information. Look at the table below for more.

Print size and resolution

What resolution you need for certain printouts



As we've hopefully shown in this feature, the relationship between resolution and output is as vital as it is confusing. This table aims to explain what size image you can expect from a certain ppi. If you keep this in mind you will hopefully avoid any nasty surprises

Print size	150ppi	300ppi
6x4	900x600	1800x1200
7x5	1050x750	2100x1500
8x6	1200x900	2400x1800
10x8	1500x1200	3000x2400
A4	1754x1240	3508x2480
A3	2480x1754	4960x3508





tutorials

Whether you want to learn about new techniques or try your hand at something more creative, this section is for you...

Big technique

Work with Variations 44
The Variations command is a powerful tool when it comes to colour correction. See how it all works here

Focus on...

We continue to work our way through the inbuilt tools of the Photoshop software and reveal how they can be used to create better artwork

Render filters	36
Brush settings	52
Transform tools	64

Cool plug-ins

FocalBlade 70
No matter how good a photographer you are, there will undoubtedly be some images that are a bit on the fuzzy side. Our featured plug-in this issue is FocalBlade, which aims to take the hard work out of sharpening soft photos

Tutorial starts on page 26

Master montages

Make more of your photos by displaying them in a montage

32 Fake depth of field	38 Digital painting: Art Nouveau	48 Transform the shape of an object	54 Boost colour with Photo Filters
58 Create an abstract background	66 Design an invitation	72 Print images to tiles	

CHECK IT OUT! | TUTORIAL RESOURCE FILES CAN BE FOUND ON THE CD – SEE THE INSIDE BACK COVER



**essentials****SKILL LEVEL**Beginner
Intermediate
Expert**TIME TAKEN**Approximately
2 hours**YOUR EXPERT**

Lora Sykes

ON THE CD

Source files

Master photo montages

Looking for a clever way of presenting lots of different photos in one coherent image? Try this montage technique, and also discover how we created this issue's cover



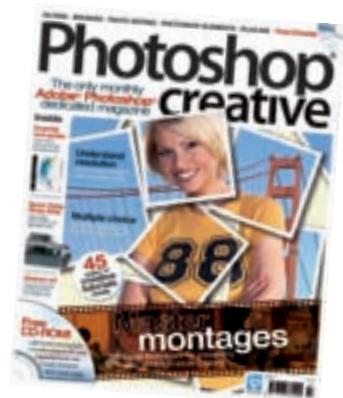
Making a photo is easy enough, but when it comes to presenting all of your images in the best way, you might end up scratching your head.

A lot of the time it might just be a case of printing out single images and putting them in frames, but if you have a collection of photos from a single event – maybe a holiday or wedding – then it's sometimes nice to have more than one photo displayed at a time. Montages are one solution to this, and involve different elements or photos being used to make up one image. Often people will apply a feather to the edges in an effort to make a seamless whole, but this can sometimes end up looking a bit naff.

If you follow this tutorial, though, you can still have more than one image in a file, but achieve a more exciting and fresh result.

The montage here takes its cue from the mosaic effect, where a whole picture is made up of separate squares. In traditional mosaics these would be coloured squares that are used to give form to the image. In our example, the squares are composed of bits of photo, housed within a crisp white frame. The effect works best if you concentrate on a strong subject, and then you can treat background elements with different blending modes or filter effects. This means the viewer's eye still has a main point of focus, but then on closer inspection they realise that there is in fact lots of different photos.

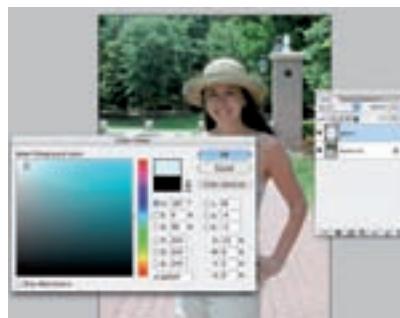
Because this technique manages to incorporate so many different elements, it is perfect for a wide range of uses. It can be used as an cover to a photo album, possibly made into a card, or even used as the menu page for a DVD. You could even use it to create the cover of a magazine, which is exactly what we have done! Of course, there doesn't have to be a reason for doing it apart from the fact that it's an unusual and effective way of presenting a photo. And from a purely educational standpoint, you learn lots of valuable Photoshop tricks, including making selections, working with layer styles and creating a traditional film strip. Once you perfect this technique, we suspect you will start using it on all of your images.



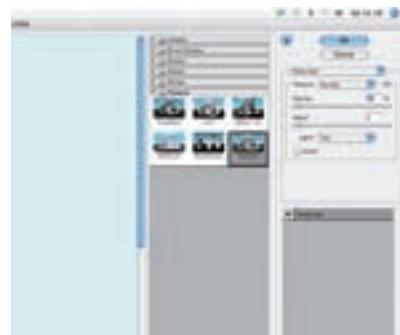
Learn the techniques that were used to create this issue's cover

GET INTO POSITION

Prime the elements for the tutorial



01 The main photo Copy the 'holiday photo.jpg' file from the tutorial files on the magazine's disc. Create a new layer and then double-click on the Foreground colour square in the toolbar. Choose a suitable paper colour – we went for pale blue (Cyan= 11 Yellow= 3) – and then click OK.



02 Create a canvas Now go to the Edit menu and pick the Fill option. Select Foreground colour and click OK. Pay a visit to the Filter menu and go to Texture>Texturiser. Pick Canvas from the Texture drop-down menu and set Scaling to 59%, Relief to 3 and Light to Top. Click OK.



03 Move into place Double-click on the 'holiday photo' layer in the Layers palette to unlock it. You need to do this so you can move it to sit above the paper layer in the Layers palette. Making sure your still on the 'holiday photo' layer, pick the Move tool and move the image up and to the right-hand side. Go to Edit>Transform>Scale to reduce its size just a whimsy.

Secrets of successful montages

Although this technique can work on pretty much any photo, there are a couple of things you can do to make sure you get optimum results. If you are working on a portrait photo, try not to cut the face up – use one square for the whole face area. Also be careful to keep the square selections reasonable close together. If they're too far apart you won't be able to see what the original photo was!

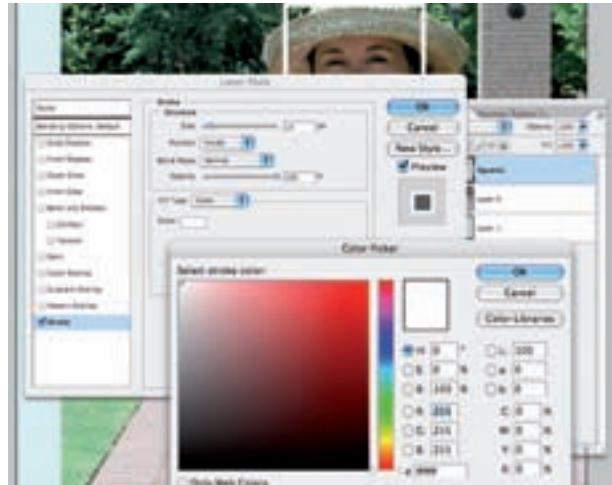


MAKING SELECTIONS

Start building up the squares



04 Hip to be square Go to the toolbar and select the Rectangular Marquee tool. Now make a selection of about 6cmx6cm over the face. Copy and Paste onto a new layer and call it 'Square'.



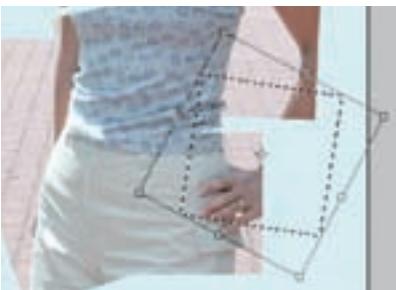
05 Stylish addition Double-click on this newly created layer in the Layers palette to bring up the Layer Style dialog. Click on Stroke at the bottom left-hand side. Change the Size to 14px and set Position to Inside. Click on the colour rectangle at the bottom and choose White.



06 Not finished yet Still in the Layer Style palette, choose Drop Shadow. Set the Blend Mode to Multiply and change the Opacity to 53%. Move the Angle to 145 and check Global Light. Change the Distance to 10px, Spread to 4% and Size to 21px. Click OK. This layer is now our template for the layer style and we can copy the style into each square layer once they've all been cut out (see step 10, 11).



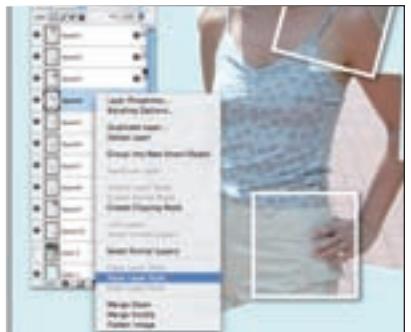
07 And again To get identical selections for the rest of the image, go to Select>Reselect. This brings up your last selection. Click back on the 'holiday photo' layer in the Layers palette. Pick the Rectangular Marquee tool once more and move your mouse over the marching ants of your selection. When you see a white arrow, click and hold your mouse button down and move the selection to a new position. Copy and Paste as you did before.



08 Variety is the spice of life To keep the montage interesting, you need to vary the angle of the selections. This gives a nice scattered look. After you have brought the selection back by reselecting, go to the Select menu and pick Transform Selection. You can now click and rotate the selection. When you have your angle, hit Return and then Copy and Paste in the same way.



09 The nifty part To apply the Stroke and Shadow effects to all of your selections, Ctrl-click (Mac) or right-click (PC) on the first layer that you have already applied the layer style to and select Copy Layer Style. If you're in Elements, go to Layer>Layer Style>Copy Layer Style.



10 Paste layer style Now click on each square layer in turn in the Layers palette and Ctrl/right-click to pick Paste Layer Style. Elements users can go to Layer>Layer Style>Paste Layer Style. Keep doing this on each one until all your squares have white frames and shadows.

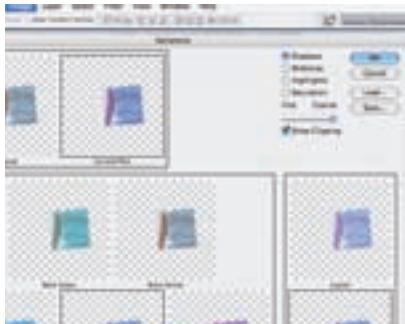


NOTES | TURN TO PAGE 44 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE VARIATIONS COMMAND



ADDING VARIATIONS

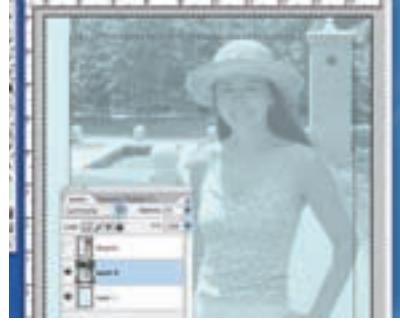
Mix up finishes for more striking effects



11 Varied finishes You can keep your selections as they are or add some variations in colour. We clicked on random layers and applied some different effects. Go to Image>Adjustments>Variations. Click Shadows and have fun! We chose More Blue and More Yellow for some of our squares.



12 Not just Variations In addition to Variations, you may like to try a quick blast of the Color Balance option (found under Image>Adjustments>Color Balance). You might fancy desaturating some as well. When you've finished adding effects, select all of the square selection layers in the Layers palette and go to Layer>Layer Merge.



13 Photo editing Click on the 'holiday photo' layer and change the blending mode to Luminosity. Reduce the Opacity slider to 44%. With the Rectangular Marquee, draw over the photo, leaving an even border around the outside to neaten things up a bit. Go to Select>Inverse and then delete.

Expert Tip



Loading brushes

To alter the current brush set, select the Brush tool and then click the little brush preview square in the options bar. When a window appears with all the brush choices, click the little right-pointing arrow. Select one of the brush sets and then click OK. You'll see the new brushes appear in the window.



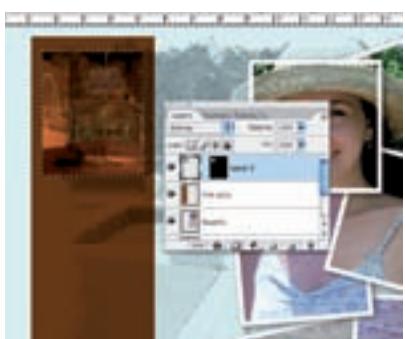
14 Border effect Deselect your selection and then click the Eraser tool. Choose the Large Texture Stroke from the Wet Media brushes set. Make it quite a big brush at around 150 or bigger. Erase around the edges to create a painterly effect. If you're unsure about how to change your brush set, see the side panel on this page.



15 The film strip With the main image kind of finished, it's time to create a film strip. Create a new layer and call it 'film strip'. Use the Rectangular Marquee to select a long rectangular section on the left-hand side. Go from the top to the bottom. Choose a reddish brown for the Foreground colour and fill the selection.



16 On the top Move the film strip layer to the top of the Layers palette. Change the blend mode to Multiply and open the 'jumbo ferry' file from the CD. Go to Image>Image Size and change the Height to 3 and Width to 4.5. Click OK, then select all and copy



17 Paste it in Go back to the montage document, create a new layer and make a rectangular selection in the shape and position of an image on a negative. Choose Paste Into from the Edit menu. Go to Image>Invert and change the blending mode to Overlay.



18 Next picture

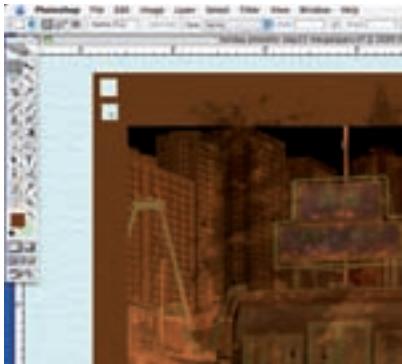
Create another new layer, go to Reselect in the Select menu. Move this selection down where you want the next image to sit on the strip and open 'Sailing again' from the CD. Reduce image size to 4cmx5cm. Select all, copy and paste into the selection on your new layer as before, invert and set the mode to Overlay. Repeat for all the photos on the disc until your negative strip is complete.



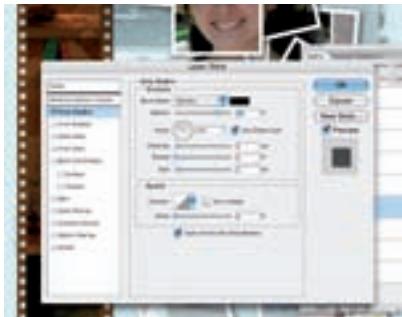


USING THE FILM STRIP

Go for the traditional feel



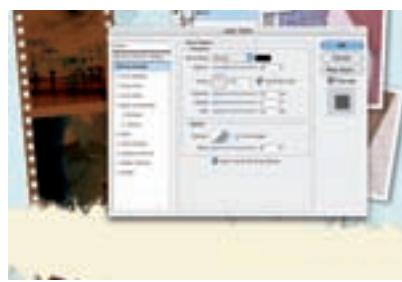
19 Final touches Click on the 'film strip' layer once more and make a small square selection along the side and press Delete. Repeat the process along both sides of the strip to give it that authentic look.



20 Same style You need to apply a drop shadow to the film strip, but the Layer Style command remember the last values so there's no need to change any settings. They will be the same as the montage shadows which is just what we want so just click OK. Select all of the film strip layers in the Layers palette and merge.



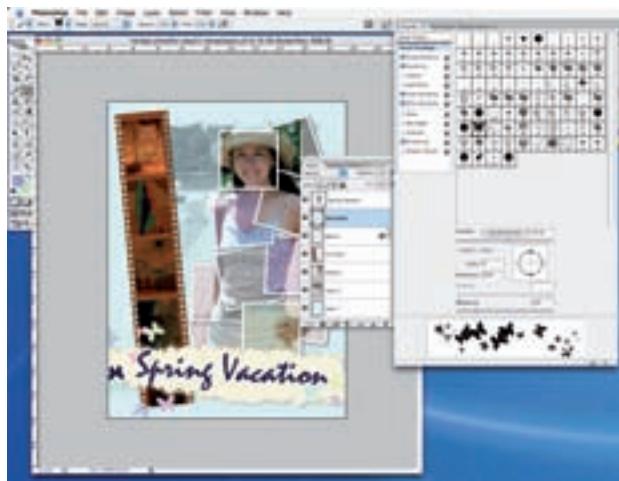
21 In position Go to Edit>Transform>Rotate and move to the angle shown here. Create a new layer and call it 'banner'. With the Rectangular Marquee, make a selection across the bottom of the image and then fill with a cream colour.



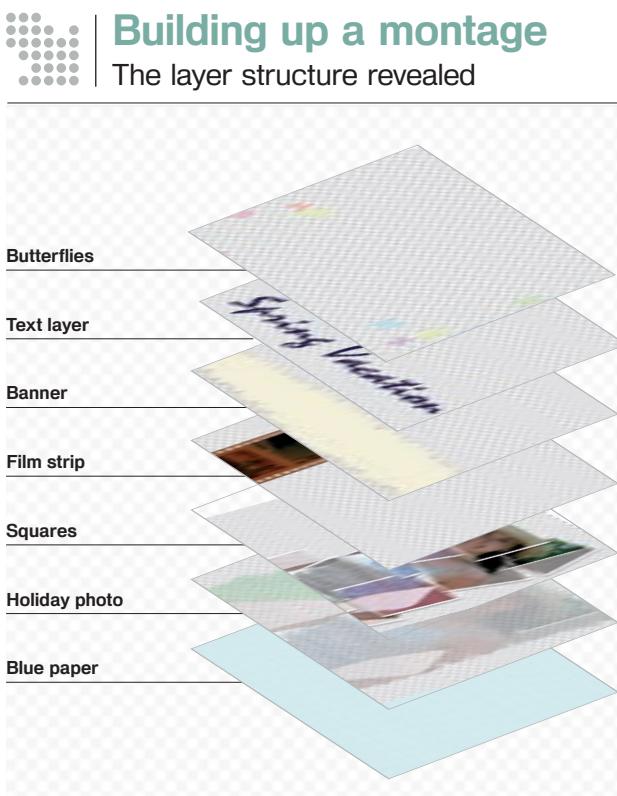
22 More border Use the same Large Texture Stroke brush eraser as before and erase along the sides of the banner. Go to Filter>Texture>Texturizer. Again you don't need to do anything except click OK as it retains the previous settings you chose for the blue background. Now go to Edit>Transform and rotate to give a slight angle. Go to the Layer Style and select Drop Shadow. Drop the Opacity down to 30% and Size to 12px. Click OK.



23 Type it in Choose a dark blue and select the Type tool. Choose a font you like (we chose Mistral Regular) from the top bar and enter your text. To change the font size or colour, highlight the text and change the value in the top bar.



24 Nice touch Add some decoration to the banner by choosing the butterfly brush from the Special Effect brush set. Open the Brushes palette, click Scattering and move the Scatter slider up to 1000%. Choose two colours for the foreground and background and then click around the banner and text.



NOTES | FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCATTERING OPTIONS, TURN TO PAGE 52





BEFORE



AFTER

Your camera won't always capture depth of field as you envisaged, but there are many ways to cheat using Photoshop...

Fake depth of field



Sometimes a blurred look

is more effective than
sharpened focus, and a
common type of blur is one
that affects selected parts of

an image. Using focus to isolate a subject from the background is a popular photographic technique, where the subject is in focus and the background is blurred. This adds feeling and depth, and is known as a shallow depth of field. In photography it's produced by controlling the distance that objects will remain in focus in front of the lens. Trusty Photoshop is great for reproducing this effect.

In last month's Photo Fix, we used selective blur to create depth of field in a simplistic way, but the boat image here has a different composition. This allows us to create a gradual blur of the background from one side to the other. By creating an Alpha channel you have more control over the areas you want to remain in focus. For a realistic effect, the degree of blurring should gradually increase to reflect the position of the elements and the desired shallow depth of field. Bear in mind that subjects on the same plane should have the same focus. It may sound confusing, but with practice you'll create this effect with ease!

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

OPACITY MASKS
SELECTING
BLURRING
ALPHA CHANNELS
QUICK MASK



BLUR WITH OPACITY MASKS

A subtler and more professional result

essentials

SKILL LEVEL



Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN



20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT



Zoe Mutter

ON THE CD



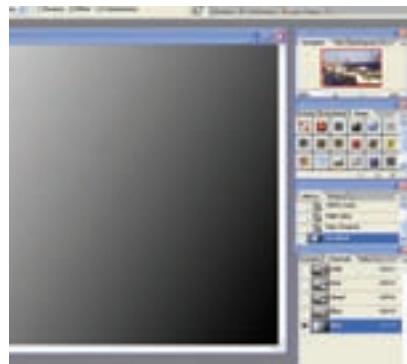
Tsaverio 2
(blur before)



01 **Channel it** Shallow depth of field can be achieved using an opacity mask. Begin by selecting Window>Channels. Create a new channel in the palette by clicking on the right-hand arrow to bring up a pull-down menu.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE

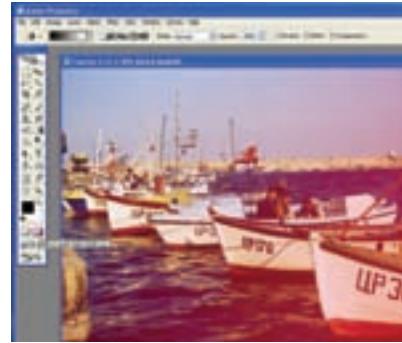
02 **Another use for gradients** With the new channel active, select the Gradient tool and drag a black-to-white linear gradient across the image from left to right. Later you can change which areas are to be in focus and which are not, and so create a more gradual transition.





03 Load the selection

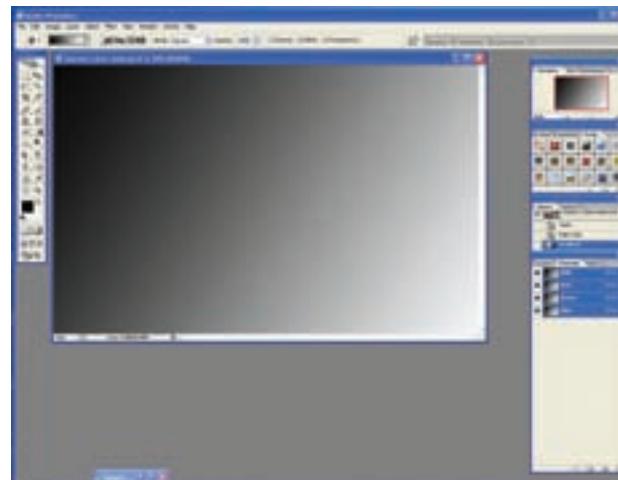
Activate the RGB channel and load the channel you have created as a selection by holding down Ctrl (PC) or Apple (Mac) while you click the new channel. This is also achieved by clicking Select>Load Selection, and then choosing the new channel.



04 Envisage with Quick Mask The marquee that appears indicates the different areas of the gradient and also the blur. To visualise it better, you can select Quick Mask mode and the gradient selection will be shown by the graduating red colour.



05 Go Gaussian Exit Quick Mask mode by selecting Standard Mode from the bottom of the toolbar. By choosing Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, a narrow depth of field effect will be produced in the image, similar to those created by manipulating the aperture of a camera. Depending on the degree of blur you want, move the slider. We chose a Radius setting of 4.



06 Shifting focus To reverse the focus area so the foreground is blurred and the background is in focus, reverse the gradient so that it goes from white to black. Remember, if you want an even change from sharp to soft focus, apply a smooth gradient.

Other Resources



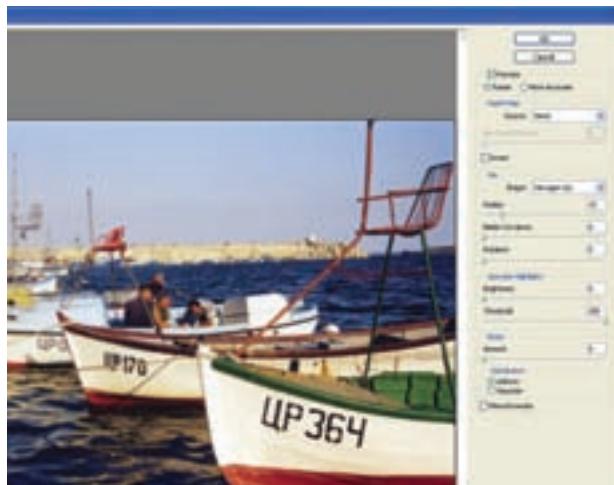
Plug-ins do the hard work for you

For an easier alternative to using Opacity Masks or the Lens Blur in Photoshop, there are plug-ins available that create a range of depth-of-field effects. These plug-ins include VariFocus Filter by Andromeda Software and Depth of Field Generator PRO by Richard Rosenman and Martin Vicanek. McFilters are mainly suited to retouching digital photos, and enable realistic effects to be added, including depth of field.



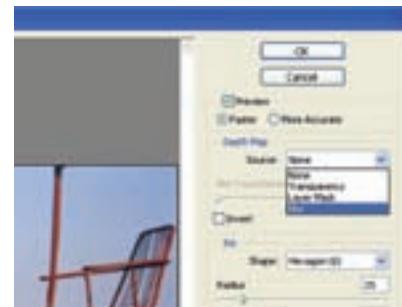
USING LENS BLUR

Gaussian isn't the only option

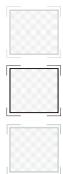


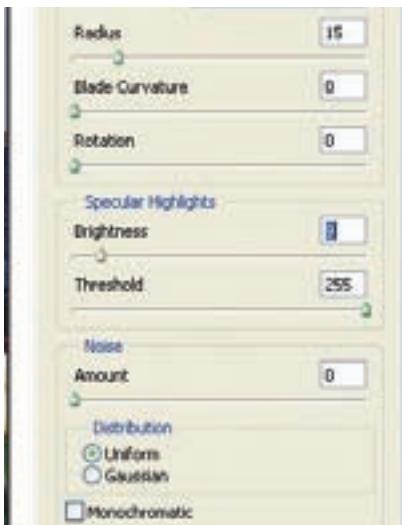
07 A different type of blur

An alternative to Gaussian is the Lens Blur option. Found in CS and CS2, you have various settings to perfect your blur. Opacity masks are still used initially. As before, create a new channel and draw a gradient across it. Instead of choosing a Gaussian Blur, select Filter>Blur>Lens Blur. The Lens Blur filter mimics the changes of a lens barrel, twisting from sharp focus to blurry.



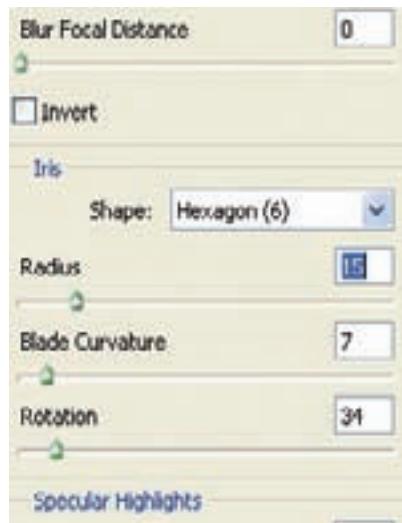
08 Blur focal distance Choose the new channel from the Depth Map Source drop-down. Blur focal distance enables adjustments of depth of field. The gradient creates a mask over the image – the black area over the part of the image that's most concealed from the blur, and the lightest gradient area being the most blurry.





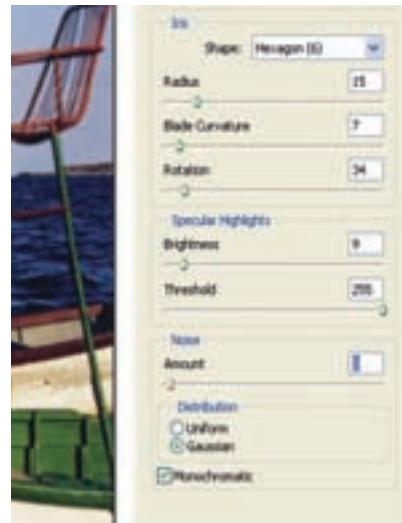
09 Spectacular Highlights

Spectacular Highlights Within the Specular Highlights, the Threshold setting establishes pixels to treat as reflections or shiny areas and add reality to the effect. Brighter pixels are treated as specular highlights. You can control the intensity with the Brightness slider.



10 Iris area

The Iris area of the window contains the Shape drop-down, which is used to change the blur's appearance and the pattern of the blur. The Radius slider alters the amount of blur, and Blade Curvature smooths the edges, while Rotation rotates the iris shape.



11 Finishing touches

A final area of the Lens Blur window that cannot be forgotten is Noise. The image looks more realistic if you add some random noise (we moved the slider to 3). Be sparing with the amount you put in, and for the most natural distribution choose Gaussian. Ticking the Monochromatic checkbox prevents noise from affecting the colour of your image.

Understand how a camera creates depth of field



Anyone who has worked with the macro mode before will be used to the shallow depth of field effect

It's useful to understand how a camera creates depth of field and how much of the image is blurred or in focus. In photography it's controlled by lens focal length, the aperture's diameter and the camera-to-subject distance. Aperture is the size of the opening of the lens (also called an f-stop). The area within the depth of field will be sharp, while areas in front or behind will appear blurry. It's confusing that depth of field is inversely proportional to film format size. Small cameras therefore produce deeper depth of field, with most of the image in focus.

Images with deep depth of field will have more of it in focus. As landscape photography usually requires great depth of field and most of the image in focus, cameras with tiny apertures are preferable. Depth of field increases as



By altering focus, you can bring drama to a shot

focal length decreases or the subject distance increases. Images with shallow depth of field have part of the image (however small) in focus. This is shown in the effect we created on the boat image, which has had selective depth of field added, blurring the background. Shallow depth of field is common in macro shots. Put simply, deeper depth of field is produced with shorter focal length or greater shooting distance.



Depth of field is a favoured technique of catalogues and ad campaigns



Adjusting the aperture of a camera allows different depth of fields to be achieved



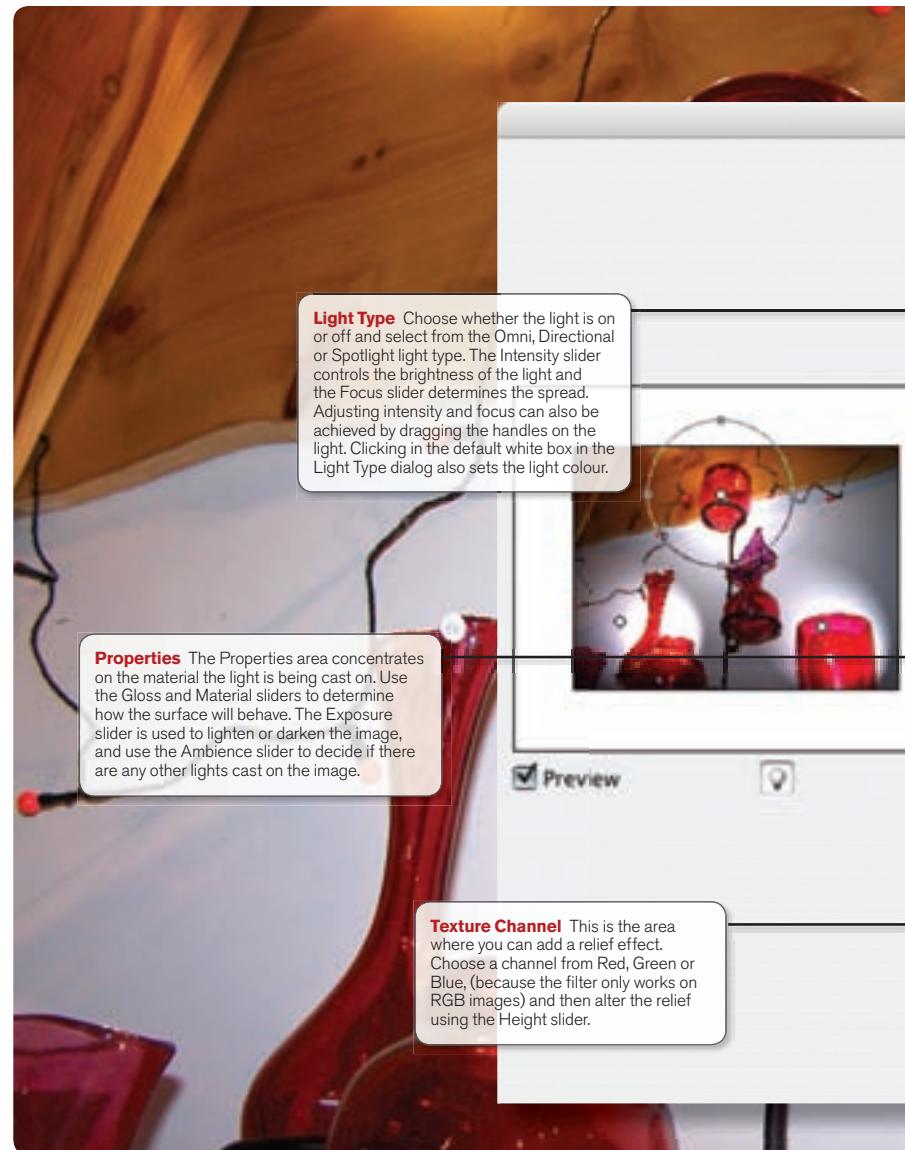


Render filters

Render filters aren't limited to creating clouds or adding lens flares. Their potential to transform an image far exceeds this...



The Render filter suite mainly enables you to produce cloud patterns and lighting effects. The Cloud filter creates a pattern resembling clouds using values varying between the background and foreground colours. Another strength is producing a water-like effect. The Difference Clouds filter uses the same method as the Clouds filter, but produces a different effect as it incorporates the clouds into the underlying image. Clouds and Difference Clouds are best applied to create effects on backgrounds – but use them with discretion for a more realistic effect. The filters can also be used for simulating light reflections and generating lens flare. Another way to create vertical noise, without using the Noise filter, is by using the Fibers filter. The most impressive area of the Render set is the Lighting Effects filter, which contains so many features it could almost be a standalone app. The Lens Flare filter is most useful for adding glints in images that resemble flares made by the sun. Again, use a subtle setting. This impressive filter set is useful for many projects, so it's well worth getting to grips with it. However, do make sure your image is in RGB mode, as most filters will only operate in RGB or Greyscale modes.



Clouds

Have fun with cloud formations

The Clouds filter creates a soft dappled texture using random values varying between foreground and background colours. There are no controls to change its settings, as the pattern is automatically produced. To make the cloud formation harsher, hold Alt (PC) or Apple (Mac) when selecting the filter. One way of finding a texture you like is to apply the filter several times. Complex effects can be created by applying other filters such as Artistic or Texture. This filter is best applied to a large, flat background area that needs some interest added. You will almost always benefit from fading the filter by selecting Edit>Fade Clouds and choosing a blending mode such as Screen or Soft Light.



Difference Clouds

Make a difference to your image

Similar to Clouds, Difference Clouds also uses values varying between foreground and background colours. However, Difference Clouds blends the pattern with the underlying image instead of placing a cloud pattern of full opacity on top of it. As implied by the name, it uses the same algorithm employed in the Difference blending mode. Therefore Photoshop saves you having to apply the Clouds Filter then fade it using the Difference blending mode. Again, the pattern is randomly generated



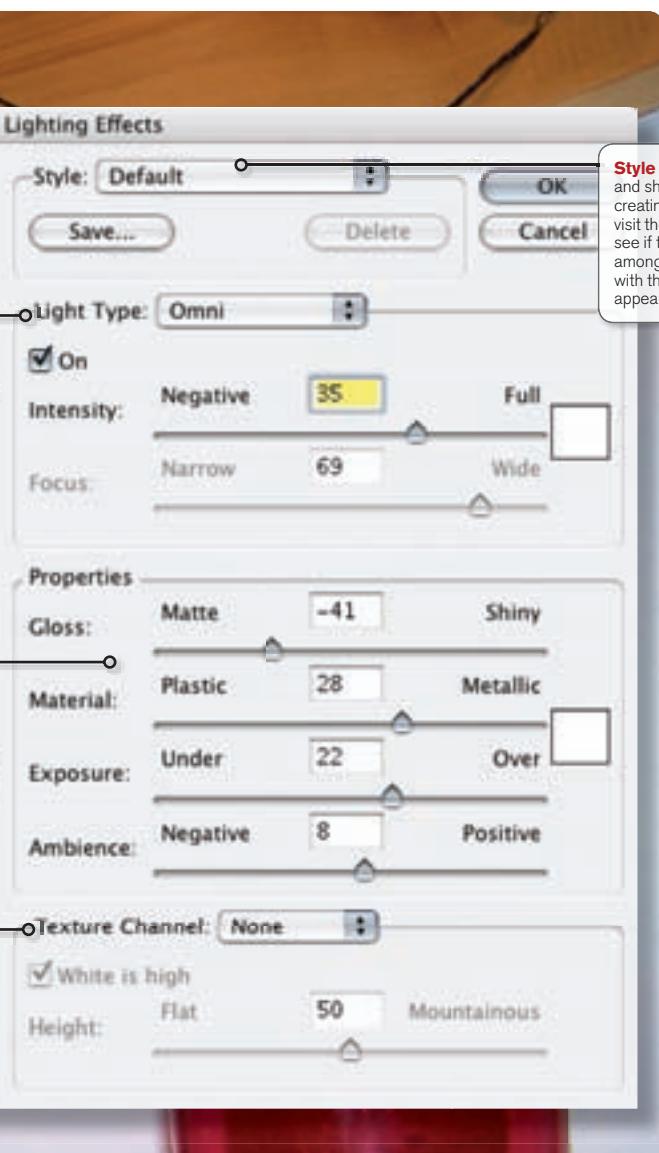
so you may need to apply the filter several times. Combining it with a filter from another suite and using different modes can create some unusual and dramatic patterns.

Tip



Pick the right mode

You can't apply some filters to CMYK images, so work in RGB with the CMYK preview turned on. Select View>Proof Colours.



Style Lighting Effects casts light and shadow on your image. Before creating your own lighting effects, visit the Style drop-down menu to see if the lighting style you want is among the 16 presets. The image with the new Spotlight effect appears in the Preview window.

The Render palette

You can easily achieve fantastic results with the range of Render filters, as demonstrated in our collection of comparison shots below.



Original Image



Clouds



Difference Clouds



Fibers



Lens Flare



Lighting Effects (Spotlight)

Tip



Moderation is key

As is the case with most filters, you really need to avoid going over the top with the finishes. You may remember a time when every image was treated to a Lens Flare, and it soon became a bit naff to use them. These filters give powerful results, but always use them while chanting 'less is more'!



Fibers

Perfect for textured backgrounds

The Fibers filter is ideal for creating textures such as wood, due to its grainy appearance. It uses the foreground and background colours to generate a random pattern. Repeating the filter won't generate a different pattern – the same one will be produced. However, clicking Randomize presents different variations on strand patterns. The filter creates vertical grain lines, so to create horizontal lines select Image>Rotate Canvas>90 degrees CW, giving the image the correct orientation. When creating a textured surface or background, define the colours you'll use first. By experimenting with the controls in the Fiber window you can create multiple variations.



Lens Flare before and after

Add a bit of sparkle to dull shots

Lens Flare simulates the refraction caused by shining a bright light into the camera lens. You can change the position of the flare by clicking on the thumbnail image or dragging it. The brightness can also be controlled to determine how drastic the effect is, and the Lens Type used to alter the shape of the flare. Unless you want an extreme effect, use this with care or the lens flare may appear unrealistic and detached from the underlying image. It's most commonly used in outdoor shots or those shot through glass to create the effect of refraction of a bright light or the sun. There are also four Lens Types to choose from to simulate different lens flare effects.





Prochainement

TOURNÉE
DU
CHAT
NOIR

DE
ROLPHÉ SALIS



essentials**SKILL LEVEL**Beginner
Intermediate
Expert**TIME TAKEN**Approximately
2 hours**YOUR EXPERT**

Hannah Gal

ON THE CDLots of lovely
cat photos

The Art Nouveau poster style

It's hard to imagine the modern world without posters. Yet it wasn't until the mid 1860s that the poster was invented...



he 'father' of the poster, Jules Chéret developed the colour lithography technique in France. The new medium was an instant success, turning Paris

into what was penned 'the picture gallery of the street'. Pretty soon, the poster vogue was in full bloom throughout the West. Talented artists suddenly turned their attention to the art form. Other creators such as Alphonse Mucha helped develop Art Nouveau, and the most prominent poster artist of all was Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

Lithography was a great revelation to artists. Where woodblock and copper

engraving necessitated a draughtsman to transfer the image to the plate, and engraver to carve the image out of the plate, lithography meant the artist could draw directly onto the lithographic material.

We have chosen the work of a socially conscious artist, Theophile Steinlen, who achieved great commercial success through illustration work for magazines and advertising. His famous work *Le Chat Noir*, a colour lithography created in 1896, features a bold central cat character, a decorative pattern and Art Nouveau type.

We'll turn a cat photograph into a black-and-white lithograph, create the characteristic

colour scheme and look into Art Nouveau type for the writing. The cat's tail, which plays such an important part in the composition, is missing from our photo and will need to be carefully drawn and coloured. For the ornamental circle over the cat's head, we'll turn to Photoshop's Shapes and free handwriting. There are a few approaches to this tutorial. We've started by showing how to create a lithography action that can be applied to any photo to emulate the style, then we'll show a quick way of getting the cat shape. However, if you want to do things properly, and really get a feel for the original, jump this and head to step 11 where we craft the cat by hand.

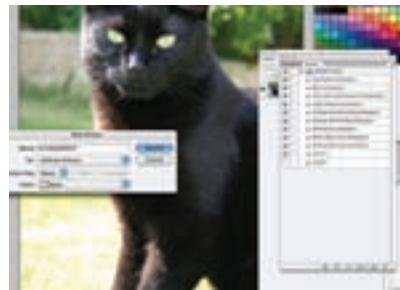
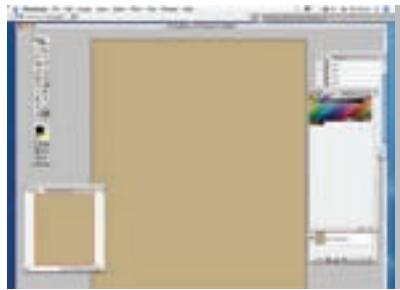
KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

CREATE ACTIONS
MANIPULATE PHOTOS
WORK WITH TEXT

ACTION STATIONS

Make things easy in the future



01 Set the scene We could have skipped these steps and made the black cat creation our starting point, but we wanted to show how to create an action to emulate the black-and-white lithography effect in Steinlen's work. Open a new file 290mm high, 250mm wide. Go to Layers>New Layer and name it. Select a sandy brown colour and fill.

02 Create a new action We will create a lithography-effect action that can be easily applied to any photo in future. Open the above cat photo from the CD and then flip it horizontally. Set your foreground colour to black. Go to the Actions palette and press the New Action button. Name your new action 'Lithography'. All your actions will now be recorded.

03 Desaturate We need to lose colour detail in the photograph. Select the Pencil tool from the Toolbox. Go to the Brushes palette and select a small brush. Go to Image>Adjust>Desaturate to lose colour information. Alternatively, use the Hue/Saturation dialog.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE



Resources



About reproductions

There are many reproductions of this popular piece in existence, bearing different colour schemes. In some, the surface on which the cat is resting is deep pink, whereas in others it's a rusty orange. In some, the colour is quite faded and uneven in places – in others, it features solid colour throughout the scene.

From Van Gogh to Picasso, ancient art to modern-day illustrations, this is the case with many famous artworks, and the surest way to render an image true to the original is to go to the museum and see it in all its glory.

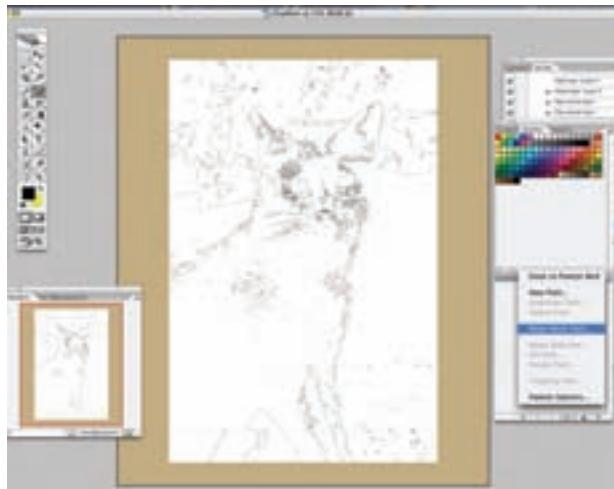


CONTINUE WITH THE ACTION

One-click lithograph

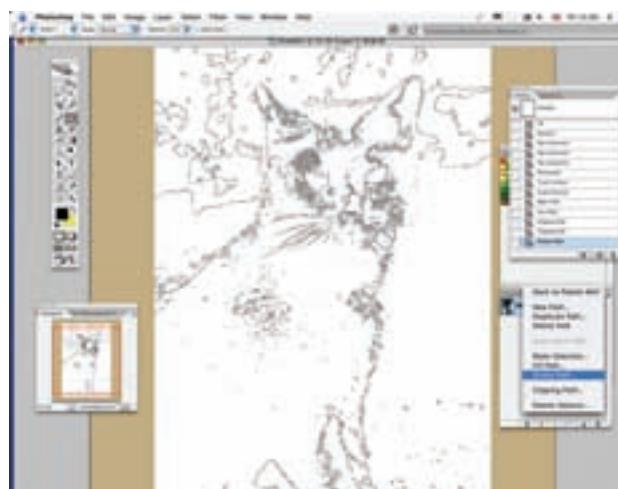


04 Trace the contour Go to Filter>Stylize>Trace Contour. Set Edge to Upper and a Level of 70. Look at the Preview window to examine detail. If too detailed, lower the Level value, if not detailed enough, increase the Level value. In the Channels palette, click on the Load Channel as a Selection button to select your lines (it's the ghosted circle at the bottom of the palette).



05 Make a work path

In the Paths palette, click on Make Work Path From Selection (this is the circle with two lines sitting on top). This can be time-consuming, depending on how much detail is to be processed. With the work path in place, go to the Options arrow/triangle in the Paths palette.



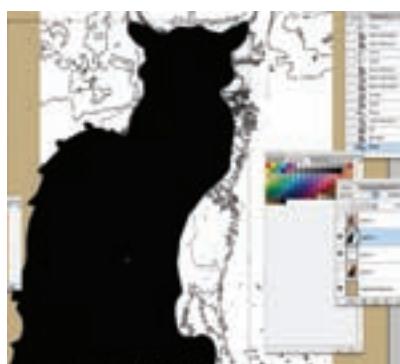
06 Stroke Path Select Stroke Path. You are now applying the Pencil effect to the image. This is the final step in the action before stopping the recording. You can keep the path for other manipulation work, but it's no longer needed for this action. Click on it to select, and then drag it to the rubbish bin.



07 Action completed Go to the Actions palette and select the Stop Playing/Recording button. This will stop the Lithography creation recording. You can now load any photo into Photoshop and play the Lithography action in the Actions palette for the effect. If the detail level does not complement your new photograph, adjust the Level value in step 4.



08 Cat shape If you're not up to the drawing task of the cat shape, locate a print of the original online, pick the Magnetic Lasso tool and trace around the shape on a new layer. Don't be afraid to zoom in on your reference image. Save your selection for possible future use. Transfer the selection to the canvas created in step one.



09 Colour and transform Go to Edit>Free Transform and adjust the size of the black cat selection. When it's a suitable size, fill it with solid black. You now have the cat shape ready, willing and waiting for all the other elements to be added.



10 Cut to size If you have the white lithography layer behind the black cat shape, you can get rid of it using the Eraser tool because you have what you need. This is the shortcut method but you don't have to do this, as we'll see in the next step.



INTRODUCE MORE COLOUR

A watercolour effect makes things more impressive



11 By eye Here we've taken the white cat lithograph, placed it on the sandy canvas and used the Eraser to cut away the photo background to get a similar shape to Steinlen's original. Go to the Layers palette and choose New Layer. Name it 'Stand'. This will be the layer for the rectangular pinky orange shape the cat is sitting on.



13 Black line Make sure you don't cover an area repeatedly, but leave a slightly imperfect effect in parts. Set a blackish Foreground colour. Reduce brush size, to 27px and with a steady hand and full opacity, draw a contour line around the edge of the stand. When you're finished with the stand, increase the brush size, pick a black and paint the white cat layer in, using the same loose technique as for the stand.



14 Bright line Now create a new layer for the line that surrounds the cat, and name it. There is no easy trick to creating this thin line. If you wanted to cheat your way around it, you could simply select the line of the original and paste. We sampled the colour of the light brown background, reduced brush size and used a steady hand to slowly trace the cat shape, referring to the original poster.



15 More bright lines Carry on tracing the cat and adding the detail lines. It may take a couple of attempts! The easiest way to correct mistakes is to cover unwanted parts of the line with a black brush. Alternatively, clone over unwanted parts with surrounding black.



16 Eyes and whiskers

The whiskers are light brown when they're over the face, but as soon as they go past this, they turn black. Stay with the same brush size and opacity, but change the colour to black. As in previous steps, this might take a few attempts, so it's an idea to create a new layer for the whiskers.

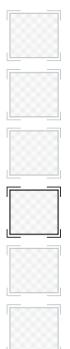
Get in on the action

All your changes applied at once!

Actions are a useful feature that can save a great deal of time and effort. They give you the option to apply the same adjustment to a number of images in one go.

The process is simple. You record an action, then apply it to multiple images without needing to open each individually. Start by selecting New Action in the Actions palette. As you apply changes, the steps are being recorded, clearly visible on the Actions palette. You can sharpen, apply Levels, resize, crop, etc. Whatever the change, once executed it becomes part of your recorded action.

When done, save the action into your Actions palette. Now it's ready to apply to whatever image you fancy.



Resources



The origin of lithography

The name 'lithography' comes from the word lithos, which is 'stone' in ancient Greek. The artist drew on the surface of the stone with a greasy substance. The image was fixed, and the stone washed with water. The water covered the blank areas but not the image. The greasy printing ink was rolled over the stone, clinging only to the image. Finally, paper was laid on the surface and pressure applied, to create the lithographic print.



Expert Tip

Forewarned is forearmed

Instead of finding your colours as you go along, you can plan your colour theme before you start work on your painting. Create an artist's palette that includes the colours to make your piece. Go to Brushes and select a medium-sized brush. Choose a colour to go in your palette and apply a dab of it to the new palette. Continue to build a selection that will serve you throughout. You can use any brush as well as any dab shape to create the palette.



SEEING CIRCLES

Carrying out the background detail



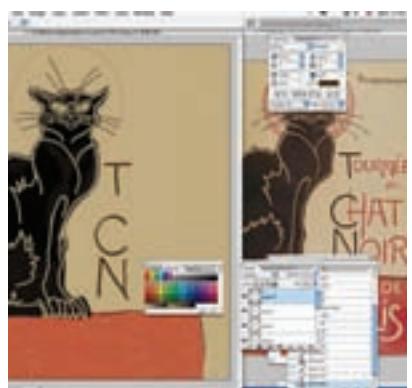
17 Pink circle The pink/red circle behind the cat's head plays an important part in the overall composition. Create a new layer for the circle and name it. Select the Elliptical Marquee tool, and while pressing Shift, create a perfect circle around the head. Set the pink colour, go to Edit>Stroke and set a 5px width on the outside.



18 Type 1 Many Art Nouveau fonts exist that imitate the period's style. You can select a ready-made font to achieve the period poster effect. Open the long Photoshop font list and examine the samples. We experimented with Sarah Caps (from <http://eksten.net/webgraphix/fonts/s/sarahc.html>) and Feena Casual (from www.1001fonts.com). Both are free.



19 Type 2 We will not use a ready-made font, here, but use a brush to draw the writing in. First create a new layer. Now set a small brush size (use the same watercolour brush as before). In the Brushes palette, select Shape Dynamics, set Fade in the Size Jitter Control drop-down menu to 100, and experiment with Minimum Diameter Level in order to get the smaller, fading ends of letters right.



20 Type 3 Start drawing the brown letters. If you think the brush is too big or too thick, adjust the size. There's no right or wrong way of doing this. Add in all of the text.



21 The tail The cat's tail is missing. Again, start by creating a new layer and naming it. Choose the same Watercolour brush used for the cat's body, sample the same black colour and carefully draw the shape. If you chose to complete the text in an earlier step, use that as a positioning guide. Draw the thin contouring line around the tail to match the body.



22 Type on the stand Carefully sample the colour of the original text and draw the remaining type on the pink stand. The text on the original poster has almost fully covered the area around the cat, but we've opted for the popular present day version. Place a low opacity version of the original over your text to check on progress.



23 Pattern In order to create the Art Nouveau feel, we designed a pattern to fill the circle over the cat's head. In the toolbar, click on the Shape icon and select the Custom Shape tool. In the Options bar, make sure Shape Layers is selected. (First square shape on the left next to the Custom Shape icon.)





CONTINUE THE BACKGROUND

Things are shaping up nicely



24 Ornaments In the Options bar, open the Shapes selection and click on the little triangle on the top right. From the list, hit Select All to display all the shapes on offer. We chose Floral Ornament 1, but any of the floral ornaments will suit this decoration.

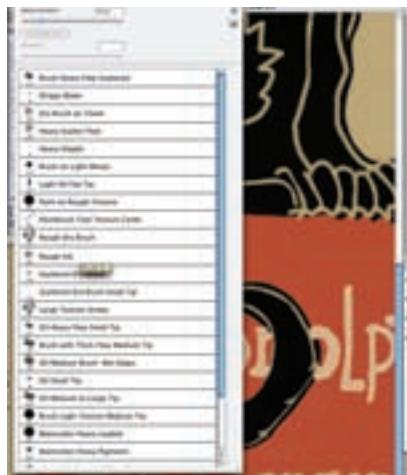


25 Transform the ornament Sample pink from the original or use the colour picker. Drag the Shape over the image until you reach the desired size. Create several copies. You might wish to change the direction of some. To do that, go to Edit>Transform and adjust accordingly.



26 More ornaments Create three copies of the original pink circle and use the Transform tool to adjust size according to the original. Use a small smooth brush to freely create letters around the head. Adjust the angle of your hand as you go along. Finish with a pattern drawn freely, or choose a ready-made shape.

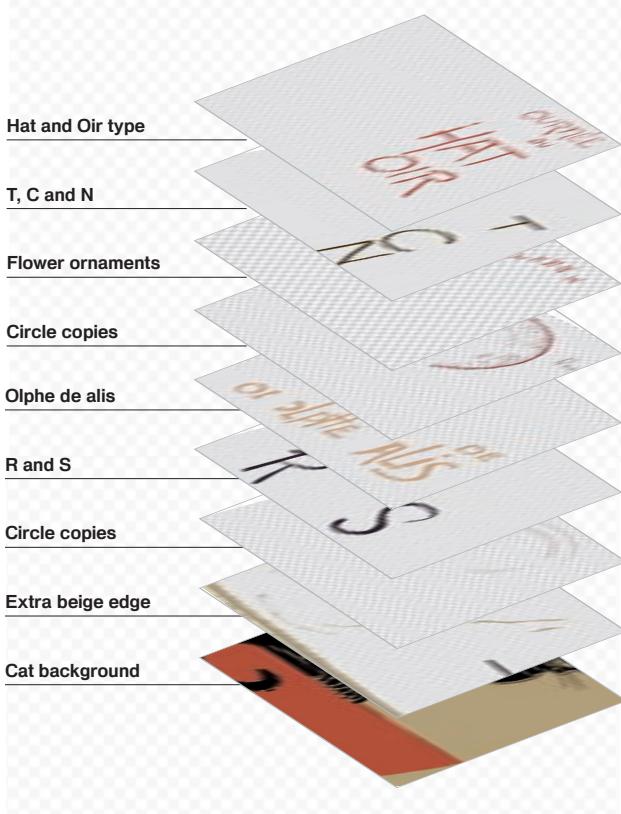
27 Smoothing and fine-tuning Use the Eraser tool as well as the Cloning tool to clean up the image. Lose any 'leftovers' and smooth imperfect lines. You might find it easier to create a flattened version of the image to do this, but please keep a layered version as well!



28 Rough Ink The bottom of the pink stand is made of inward brush strokes. Use the Rough Ink or Rough Dry Brush (in the Wet Media brush set) to re-create this effect. Apply one stroke and adjust brush size accordingly. Make sure you cover the entire length of the stand.

Le layer structure

How our cat came to fruition



THE BIG TECHNIQUE

Have you ever looked at an image and felt it lacks impact or looks dreary? An image can often be given a new lease of life with a simple colour tweak. There are plenty of ways to do this in Photoshop using the Image>Adjustments menu, but they can be very time-consuming and you need to have the confidence to carry out the tweaks successfully and make sure you improve the shot and not treat it to a nasty colour cast. If you know your image needs a colour tweak but aren't sure how to approach it, the best technique to use is the Variations command. Found by clicking on Image>Adjustments>Variations, this dialog box offers a host of invaluable colour adjustments without the daunting prospect of histograms or curves. You can easily see the different colour settings, and it's the perfect technique for getting rid of those nasty colour casts that ruin an otherwise perfect shot.

Experiment with the colour of your images with a little help from the easy-to-use Variations command

Variations command

Before and after

Check the progress of your image

Using Variations will improve colour quality or drastically alter the colour appearance of an image, so you'll need to keep tabs on changes. The before and after versions, known as the Original and Current Pick at the top left of the dialog, let you see how alterations will affect your image before you hit OK. The only problem is the previews are quite small, and will only give you a general overview. If you want to see variations in detail you'll need to OK the dialog, and if results are disappointing you can undo the fixes with a swift Undo. Avoid saving variations until you're fully satisfied.



WORKS WITH | VARIATIONS APPEAR IN PHOTOSHOP AND PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS (WHERE THEY'RE KNOWN AS COLOR VARIATIONS)

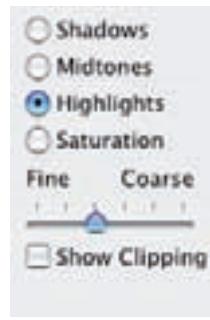
Variations



Variation options

Control your Variations settings

Rather than simply alter the colour appearance of your entire image, it can be beneficial to tweak specific features of a shot. By working through the selection of areas in your image – the Shadows, Midtones, Highlights and Saturation – you'll be able to finely tune your image with more accuracy. The Fine to Coarse slider is a very important element in the Variations dialog box. Dragging the slider to Fine will allow you to make very subtle changes to your image – perfect if you're working on a delicate shot that needs only small amounts of fine-tuning. Dragging the slider to Coarse will let you make more radical alterations. This may be too garish for some, but it's a perfect way of transforming your image.





Tip



Save your options

You can quickly save the changes made to your image without exiting the Variations command by clicking the Save button, and then selecting the folder where the altered tile will be kept.

Making colour alterations

Give your image a simple colour fix



Variations is an easy way to fix colour, but it takes practice. The thumbnails show how a tile can enhance an image. Here's a quick rundown of what they can do:



01 Colour fix

With the main tiles you can make fixes to the colour temperature of your image. Colour casts can be adjusted by clicking on appropriate tiles. Check images via the 'Original' and 'Current Pick' thumbnails.

02 Lighten up

Unhappy with your image exposure? You can use the Lighter or Darker tiles within the Variations dialog to alter the brightness of your image without having to rely on brightness/contrast commands.

03 Colour tweak

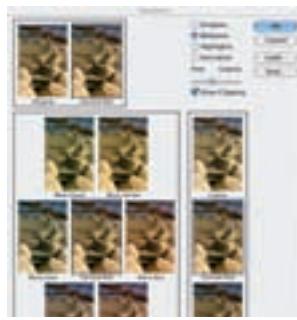
The Variations dialog doesn't always have to be used to make subtle tweaks. You can go to town with a complete colour makeover. Simply drag the slider from Fine to Coarse for more vibrant options.



Show Clipping

Quickly see highlights

Are you unsure where the Shadows, Midtones, Highlights and Saturations are in your image? This isn't a problem if you click the Show Clipping option underneath the Fine-Coarse slider. With this selected, choose the separate checkboxes and you can then quickly check the different elements. Having done that, you'll find that with every click of a colour thumbnail or the Lighter and Darker thumbnails you can instantly see the changes which have been made according to the amount of 'clipping' present in your image.



Thumbnails

Adjust the appearance of your image

The thumbnail options are the most important element of the Variations command. The colour thumbnails in the middle of the Variations command allow you to alter the colour of your original image. This works on the basis that opposing thumbnails counteract each other. For example, if your image is suffering from an unsightly green colour cast you will need to add more magenta, or if your image has a cyan colour cast you will need to click the More Red thumbnail. On the right-hand side of the box, the Lighter and Darker thumbnails increase and decrease the exposure of your image.





USING THE VARIATIONS COMMAND

Perfect the colour in your images

Using the Variations command is a great way of colour-correcting an image. Here we look at how the command works on our shell image.

essentials

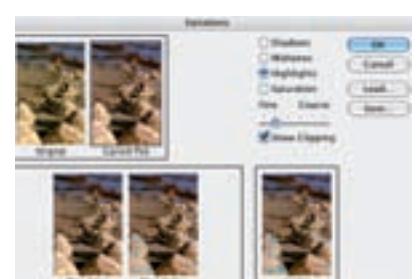
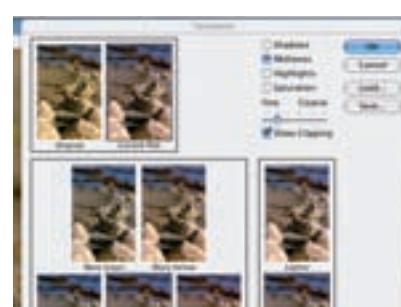
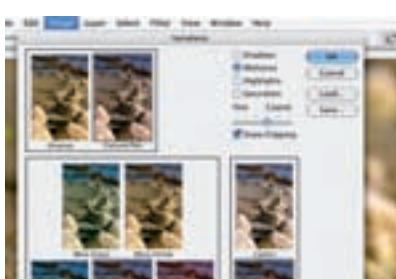
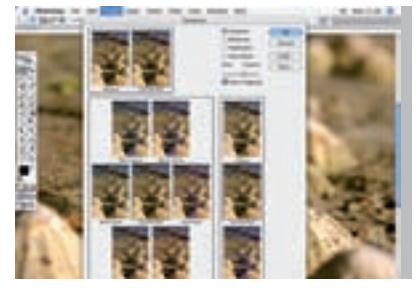
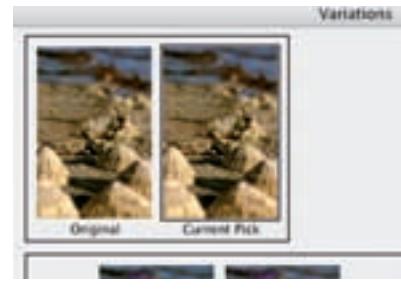
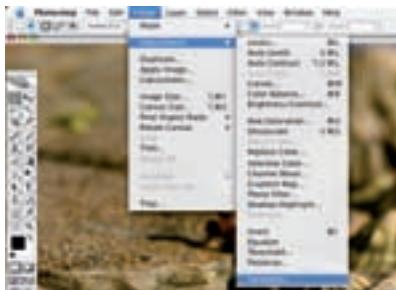
SKILL LEVEL Beginner

Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN 20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT Emma Cake

ON THE CD Original image



01 Finding Variations Open up the image you want to work on and then open the Variations dialog box. You can find this by clicking on Image>Adjustments>Variations (go to Adjust Color>Color Variations for Elements). The tiles in the dialog box should be showing different versions of the image open on your desktop.

02 Image analysis Before you start your image tweaks take a look at the Original and Current Pick tiles. These will be invaluable in seeing the improvements in your shot. Every time you make an adjustment using one of the tiles in the dialog box you'll see a change in the Current Pick tile. If you're ever unhappy about your alterations, give the Original tile a double-click.

03 Working shadows Take a look at the checkboxes to the right of the Original and Current State thumbnails. It will pay to work through each of these to make sure your image is in the best condition. The shadows will be the first option to work through. Avoid using the colour thumbnails for this – instead, alter the image using the Lighter and Darker tiles.

04 Adjusting Midtones The Midtones let you make obvious visual alterations to your image. This is your chance to get rid of any colour casts. This image has a slight yellow cast to it. To get rid of it, take a look at the colour tiles. To rule out yellow you need to add blue. This is made obvious by the setup of the colour tiles, as balance colours are set opposite each other.

05 Smaller tweaks If you need to fix a colour cast but aren't happy with the results the tiles are giving, you may need to alter the Fine/Coarse slider. Doing this will give you the chance to make very subtle alterations. The image is now slightly too blue, so reduce the slider to Fine and give the image a More Yellow click.

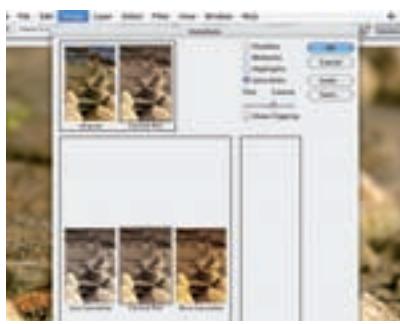
06 Highlights The highlights are the brightest areas of an image. This can be difficult to see in the Variations dialog box. It's easier to spot these areas if you check the Show Clipping box underneath the slider. You can give your image more depth if you increase the highlights within an image. This is particularly useful if you're working on a black-and-white shot.



Saturation

Adjust the colour temperature of your image

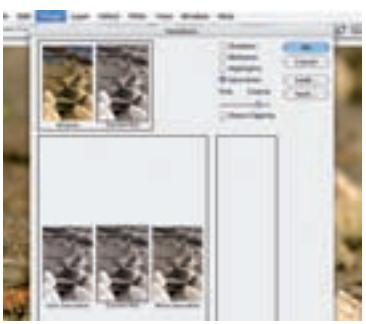
Saturation only plays a small part in the Variations dialog box, but it can heavily influence a shot's appearance. It can be measured by the amount of grey in a shot. An unsaturated shot can look washed-out to the point of being monochrome; this is when there's plenty of grey in a shot. Just as if you were clicking on the menu Image>Adjustments>Desaturate, you can use Variations to transform an image into black and white. You can give a sepia quality using Variations if you lessen the saturation and apply one click of a yellow and red tile using the Midtones option.

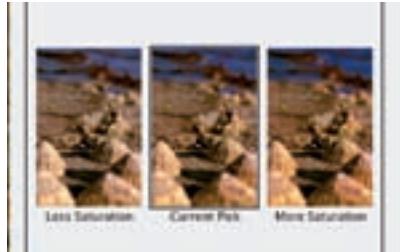


Saturated images

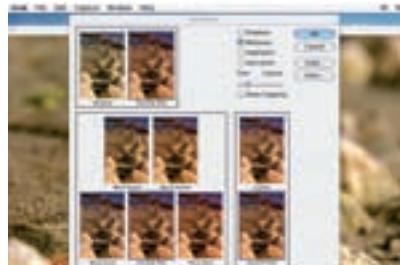
Give your images a vibrant look

Whereas a desaturated image has plenty of greytone, a heavily saturated image, where there is very little greytone, has plenty of colour. Your choice in saturation will very much depend on the effect you're trying to achieve with your image. There is no such thing as a right or wrong choice of saturation. You'll find the saturated images are much more vibrant, and it's a perfect option if you want to make the most out of rich colours and tones.





07 Saturation Even if you get the colour temperature just right using the colour tiles, your image can lack impact if you don't have the correct settings for the saturation. An image which lacks saturation can look washed-out and unimpressive, whereas a shot with too much saturation can look heavy and dark. The Variations box makes these tweaks easy with just two Less or More Saturation tiles.



08 Perfect exposure Within the Shadows, Midtones and Highlights options, you are also given the opportunity to fine-tune the exposure of your shot using the Lighter or Darker tiles. Work through each option to make sure that every element of your image is perfect. Again, you can adjust the Fine/Coarse slider to make your adjustments subtler.



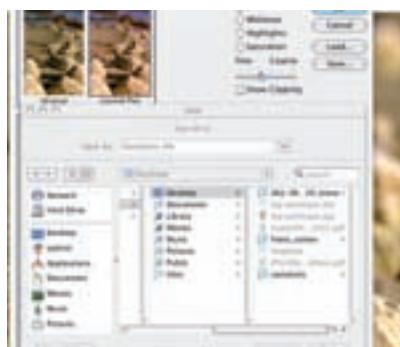
09 Save your settings Once you've spent time adjusting your image, clicking a tile here and there, it can be very easy to forget what adjustments you've made. Click the OK button to apply the effect to your image. This is where the Save button comes in handy, as it allows you to save a version of your shot. Decide where you want the tile to be saved and allocate an appropriate name to make it easy to find.

Tip

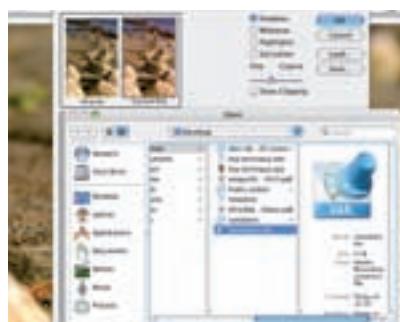


Back to the original

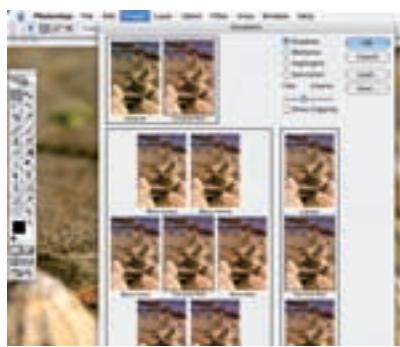
If you've made some adjustments using the Variations tiles but aren't sure that you're happy with the outcome, make sure that you click on the 'original' tile before you press OK.



10 Save-specific You may want to save your tile in a specific folder on your hard drive that doesn't initially appear when you click the Save button. Expand the Location tab to allow you to browse through the contents of your hard drive.



11 Open a tile If you have previously been working on an image within the Variations dialog box and saved your process, you can quickly load your settings using the Open button, and then navigate to wherever it was you saved it.



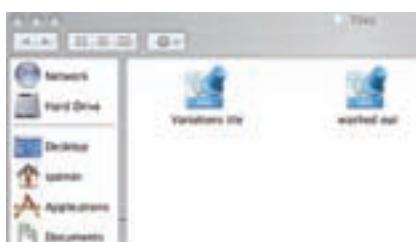
12 Confirmation You must remember that once you press the OK button any previous adjustments will be lost, so make sure you save your adjustments once you feel you've made a breakthrough in your image tweaking.



Saving tiles

Choose the best image version

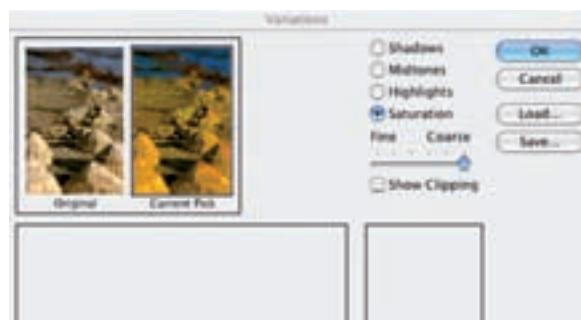
One of the best ways of deciding how you want to approach your image is to experiment with the Variations palette. Remember, you can always save your tiles and check the various effects to decide which version you like the best. To practise organised and efficient Photoshop work, it's a very good idea to set up a folder on your desktop where you can save all of these Variations options, and then use them as and when you choose.



Using the Coarse slider

Tweak the extremity of your saturation

Sometimes you might want to make radical adjustments to the saturation of your image, whereas on other occasions a small tweak is all that will be required. Adjust the level of saturation by making a swift alteration to the Fine/Coarse slider. Remember, your settings will all depend on how radical you want your colour alterations to be, and you have a wide range of choice.





Transform an object's shape



KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

LIQUIFY
FILTER
BRUSH
CONTROL
BLUR
USING QUICK MASKS



Creating a square apple requires more than a trip to Hogwarts – the Liquify filter beats any magic wand!

essentials

SKILL LEVEL Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN 1 hour

YOUR EXPERT Matthew Henry

ON THE CD Apple original



art of Photoshop's charm for many people is its ability to take a familiar object and turn it completely on its head.

This could take many formats – maybe a colour change that goes against nature, or placing items in environments they would never usually occur. This type of image editing can be a lot of fun, and produce images that wouldn't look out of place in a clever advertising campaign.

For this tutorial we're going to take the humble apple and give it a new spin by turning it square. Turning a round object square is no easy task, particularly if there's texture that can get warped, stretched and distorted to give

away the game. The apple we worked on here contains an incredible amount of lines, swirls and spots in its texture that can easily begin to look unreal if the natural shape is noticeably altered. Much of the hard work then, isn't in the physical reshaping of the object's proportions but in maintaining the detail while this reshaping takes place.

As with any Photoshop task, there are a number of different methods that could be used to achieve this effect, but the Liquify filter certainly produces the most lifelike result in the shortest length of time. It's marvellous at this sort of thing when used with care – there's a real art to selecting which bits to drag at which brush size, to prevent rather unsightly

stretch marks. But the great thing about fruit is that it's not a uniform size and contains many imperfections. You're actually better off having slightly wonky edges than having them all perfectly square. Which is a good thing, because perfectly square is not something the Liquify filter does particularly well!

It might possibly seem something of an exercise in futility, but there's more than the fun factor in this application. If you are able to get the hang of preserving detail while changing the fundamental properties of a shape, you will have mastered the Liquify filter and realised just how powerful a tool it really is. It's certainly one of Photoshop's most underrated features!

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE

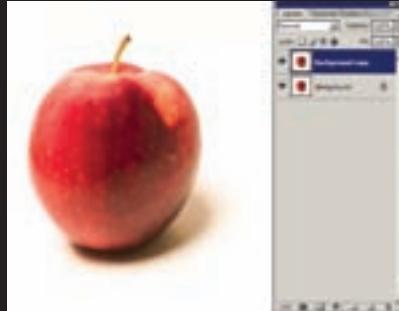


IT'S HIP TO BE SQUARE

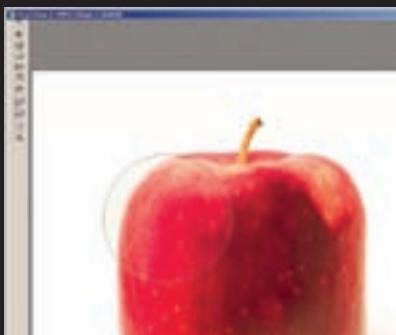
Have fun with nature



01 Set horizontal positioning It's more accurate to make a square out of an apple that's properly horizontal, so Select All Ctrl+A (PC) or Apple+A (Mac), then use Edit>Transform>Rotate to square things up a little if needs be. Use Ctrl(Apple)+D in order to deselect.

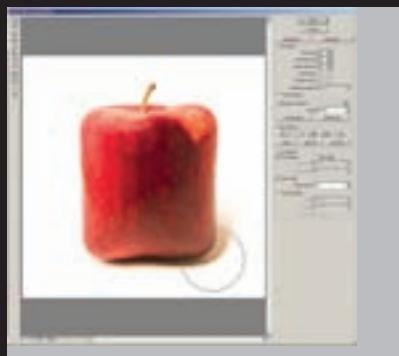


02 Duplicate background layer It's good practice when working on any image to duplicate the background layer. That way, if you mess up you've still got the original to go back to. Either select Layer>Duplicate Layer, or drag the layer to the Create a New Layer symbol at the base of the Layers palette.

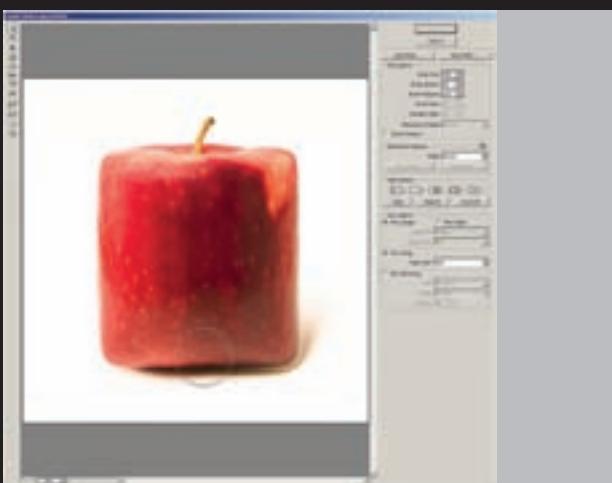


03 Fire up the Liquify filter Make sure the Background Copy layer is selected, then select Filter>Liquify. Select the biggest brush size you can, using the slider or the J key. Divide the apple into four sections in your head, and drag each upwards and outwards.

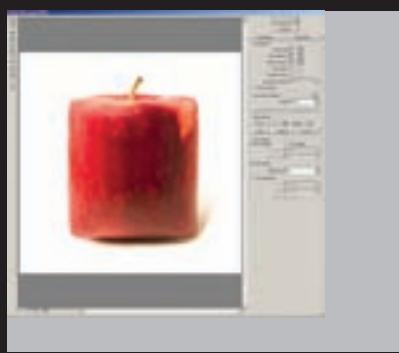
04 Work the corners more Next, take the brush size down a third or so and pull outwards and upwards again, this time starting a little closer to the corners – though not at the corner tips. If necessary, move the brush further inwards to another spot and pull to prevent overstretching a specific area.



05 And some more Take the brush size down a third again, and tease the corners out a little more. You're aiming to square them off to reduce the rounded effect, but avoid going too far because we still want some corner rounding.

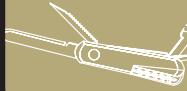


06 Correct edge bow You'll probably find now that the left, right and bottom edges of the apple are beginning to look like they're bowing slightly. Take a large brush and bring them back in line, so the edges look relatively flush.



07 Straighten things up After all this pushing and pulling, you may find the apple appears a little wonky, so take a large brush and pull at the four sections again so the apple looks relatively horizontal and symmetrical.

Tool School



Liquify max brush size

The maximum size brush that the Liquify filter can use is 600 pixels, which is a little underpowered for pushing about objects shots on today's mammoth megapixel cameras. It works best on an image of around 1000x1000 pixels, as this allows large drag movements. For bigger images you'll have to make do with a number of smaller movements to achieve the same effect – which requires that little bit extra patience and precision.





Advanced feathering

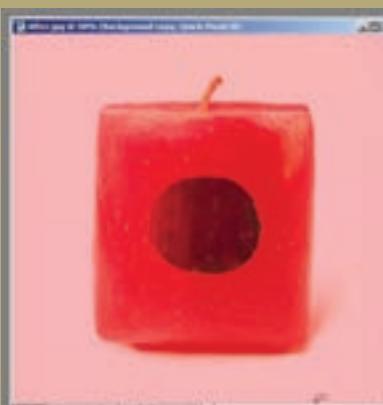
Get some real-time feathering action!

When it comes to feathering a selection, forget Select->Feather – it doesn't give you any sense of what's going on. Instead, make a selection, hit Q for Quick Mask mode, then Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Zoom in or out to see your selection, then move the slider to see real-time feathering!



01 Make the selection

Use the Freehand Lasso tool to make your selection rather than Polygonal, as the results are more natural. Bear in mind that feathering is going to bring in information from outside the selection as well, so make the selection smaller in order to compensate if needs be.



02 Enter Quick Mask mode

Hit Q to enter Quick Mask mode. You'll notice that everything selected remains normal, and everything not selected has gone a shade of red. The buttons to toggle Quick Mask mode can be found under the foreground/background colours on the Tools palette.



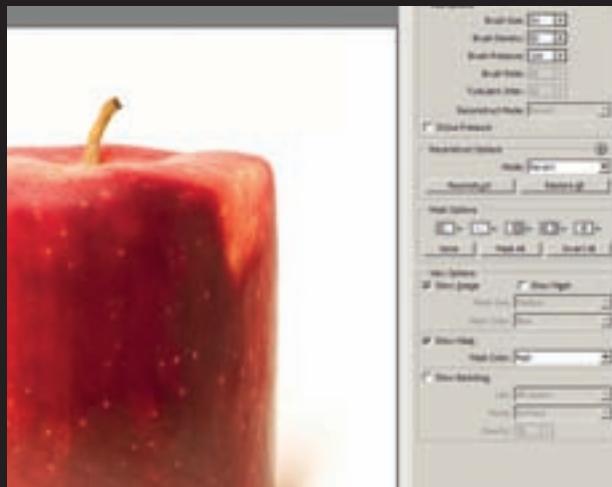
03 Feather with Gaussian Blur

Next, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and zoom in or out with the Percentage slider until you can see the whole of your selection. Move the Radius slider up and down to change the amount of feathering. After application, hit Q in order to bring back your newly feathered selection.



THE FINE DETAILS

Make sure it all lines up



10 Straighten the top edge The top edge of the apple front side now needs flattening a little to make it look a bit more like a cube. Start with a medium-sized brush, and move areas up or down to square it off, varying brush size where necessary.

08 Fine-tune corners

With a relatively small brush, we're now going to fine-tune our corners. First click and drag at the centre edge of each corner. Next, do the same thing at the corner's topmost point as it turns into the straight line, and then do the same at the bottom point.

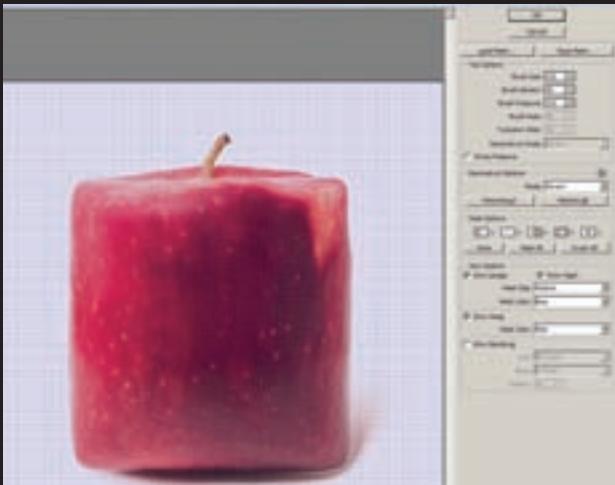
11 Add depth realism The line behind the apple core stem needs extending to give the appearance of cubic depth, so we're going to use a small brush to continually stretch the top line outwards until it extends to the edges of the shape.





SHADY BEHAVIOUR

Give the apple some presence



12 Check mesh

At this point it's a good idea to check the Show Mesh box in the View Options section of the Filter dialog. This shows you exactly what you've pushed and pulled so far with reference to the original, and can help you visualise what needs tidying up with a little more tweaking.



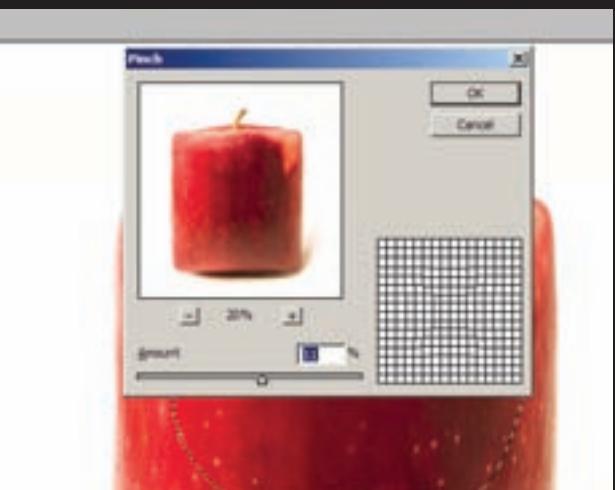
13 Cut out shadow

Next we need to sort the shadow, as it doesn't quite reflect the new apple shape. Use a Polygonal Lasso tool to cut around the shadow. Don't worry about the edge of the other side of the apple. When you've finished, hit **Ctrl**(**Apple**)+**J** to float the selection to a new layer.



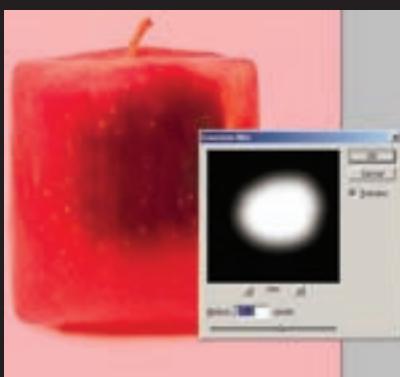
14 Liquify shadow Now go back to the beloved Liquify filter and use suitable brush sizes (try 24 at 50% Density) to shape the shadow edges so they appear squarer, without removing the corner curvature.

15 Mask out any debris You may have stretched the shadow into the apple after using Liquify, so add a layer mask with **Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All**. Next, make sure the mask is selected, then take a small brush at 90% opacity and paint black into the areas of the apple that have been affected by shadow.



17 Use a little Pinch

Hit **Q** again to exit Quick Mask mode, and the red overlay disappears, leaving you with the selection marching ants. Go to **Filter>Distort>Pinch**, zoom outwards so you can see the whole apple, and play around with the + settings on the slider until you achieve the desired result. Finally, flatten your image with **Layer>Flatten Image** and **SAVE** it!!



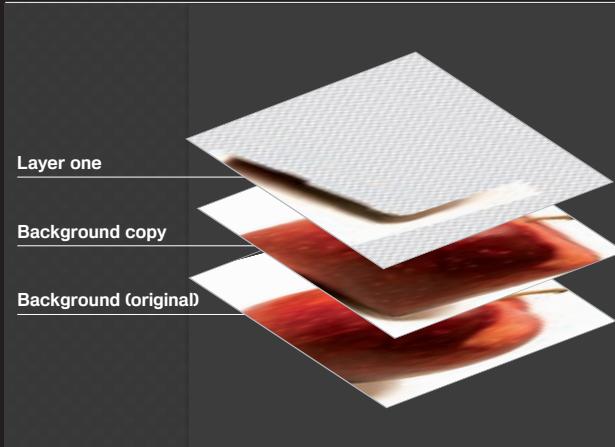
16 Select the centre bulge

The apple's upper centre still appears to be bulging towards the camera. We can fix this with a little 'Pinch'. Use the Freehand Lasso to draw a rough circle round the bulging area, and hit **Q** for Quick Mask mode. Use **Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur** to feather the selection edges.



Transforming the apple

Have your wicked way with nature!





FOCUS ON BRUSHES

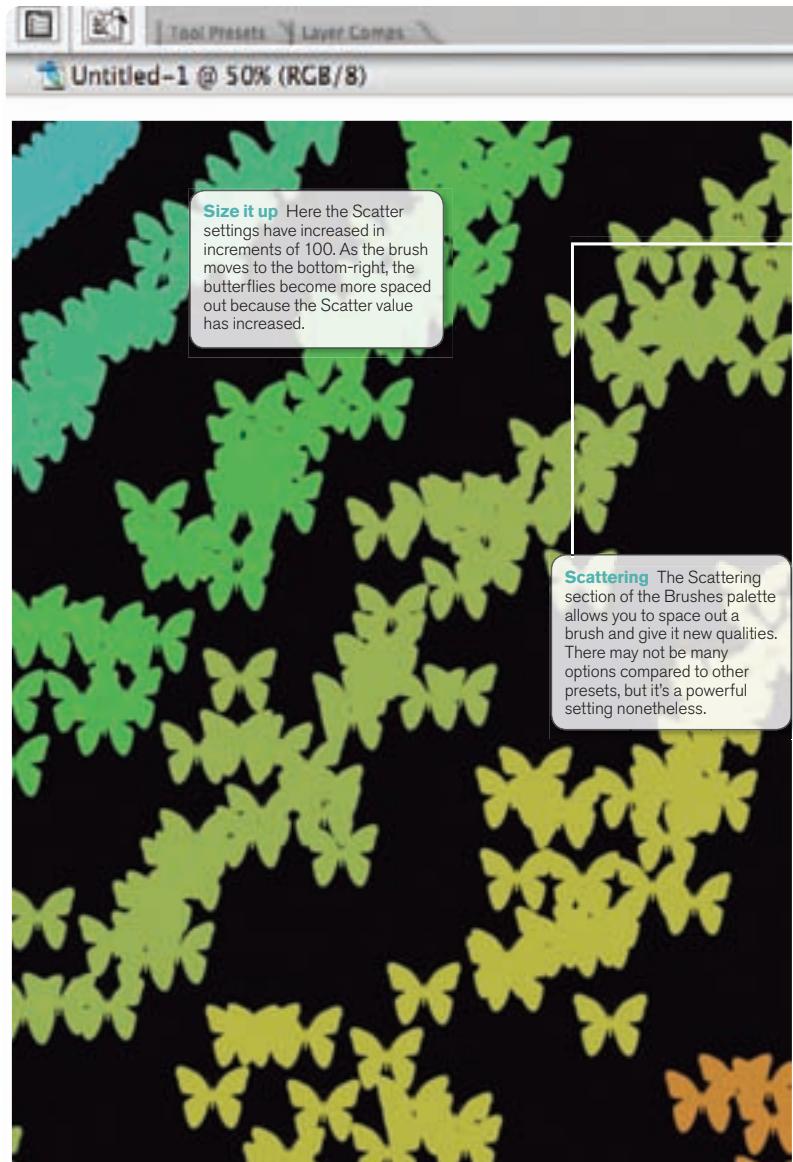
Scattering options

The next stop on our journey through the Brush palette settings is Scattering



S we've seen over the past few issues, there's a lot more to brushes than just picking one and waving your cursor about. Brushes have an awful lot of options and settings that mean you can bend them to your artistic whims. With just a couple of slider movements, you can drastically alter the properties of a brush and make it something really quite different.

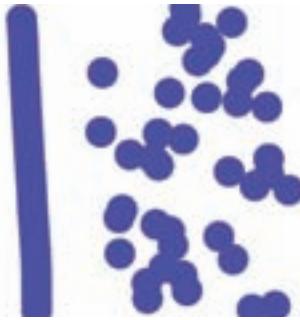
The Scattering section of the Brushes palette may not have the most options, but it quickly affects the behaviour of a brush. When you enable the Scattering option, you alter how many brush marks are made in a stroke, and can also control the space between these brush marks and their orientation. To get an instant idea of how it works, select a Soft Mechanical brush from the Basic Brush set. Open up the Brush palette and click on Scattering. You'll notice that the brush appears as a solid line in the preview at the bottom of the palette. Now whack the Scatter slider up to the maximum and make sure the Control drop-down menus are set to Off. See how the brush separates. Instead of a solid line, the brush looks like it has exploded, with a far greater surface area. After a few experiments, you will no doubt use this option time and again.



The Scatter slider

Spread it about

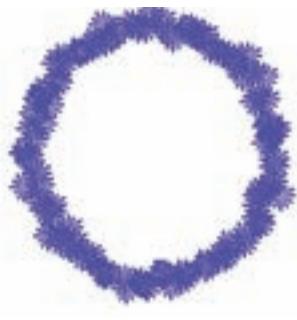
The Scattering options control the distribution between brush marks. Not only are you able to alter the spacing between brush marks, but you can also alter the orientation (see next box). The image on the right shows two brush strokes made using the same brush. The first had a Scatter value of 0%, and the second one had a value of 600%.



Work on an axis

In a line or around and around

Next to the Scatter title is a small checkbox called Both Axes. This controls the direction of the brush marks in a stroke. If you select this option, the brush marks will spray out in a radial direction (in both axes, if you will). If this option is unchecked, the marks will be in line with the stroke. Although it can be quite subtle, utilising this checkbox with the other options in the palette means you can use the brush to create new patterns or build up elements of an illustration.

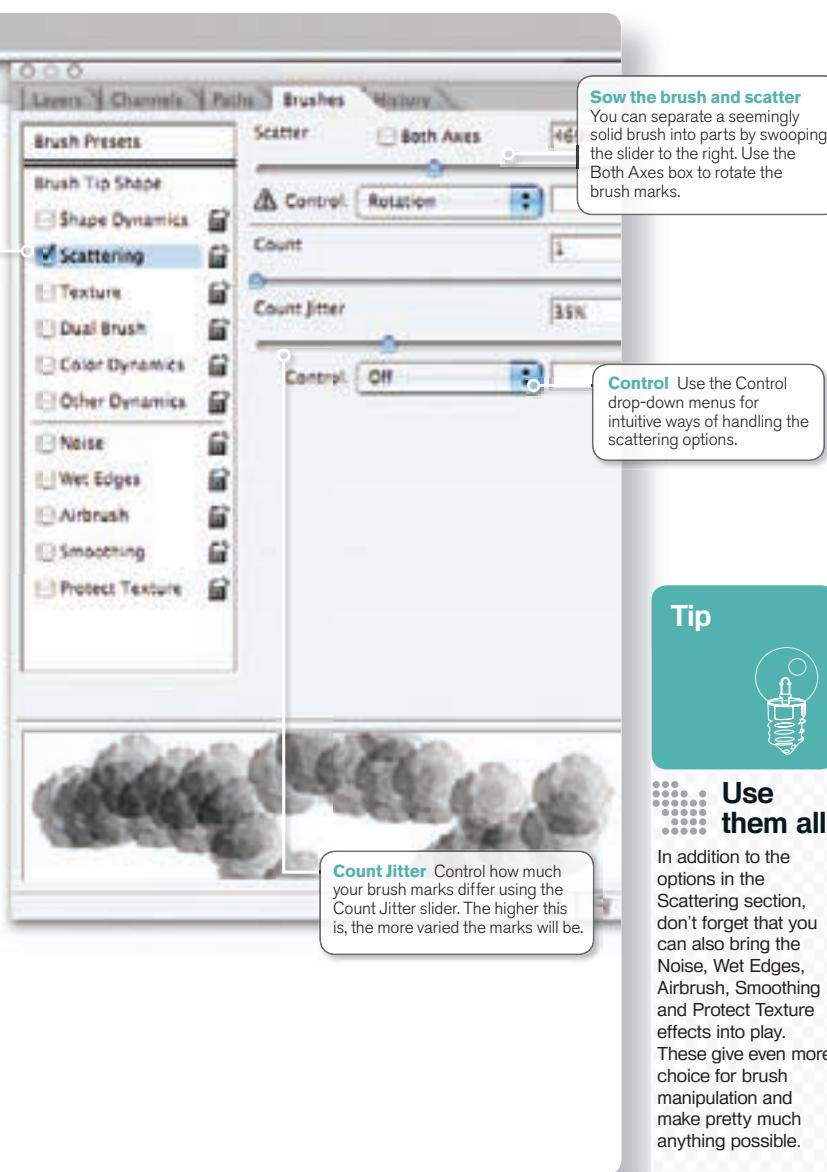


Tip



Count on it

Don't get carried away when using the Count slider. If this goes too high and leaves the spacing and scattering values behind, your brush may be rendered useless.



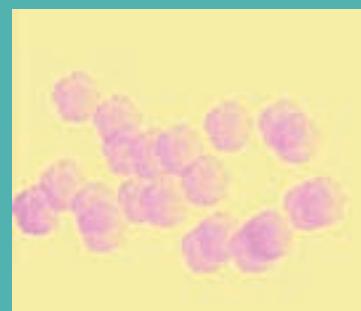
The Control drop-down

The extra menu that sits with the Scatter and Control Jitter sliders offers those with a stylus extra control. The Stylus Wheel setting is for those with Airbrush pens, but the others can be used with normal pens, as long as they're enabled to do so. Here's a look at what they do...



01 Pen Pressure

This lets you control scattering or jitter by applying more or less pressure. Probably the most intuitive way of working, you can quickly build up your effects.



02 Pen Tilt

This setting is useful if you are working on an image with lots of swoops, because the pen tilt controls the scattering or jitter. This means that as you tilt the pen, the scattering is affected.

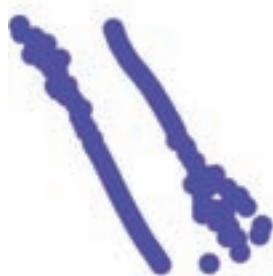


03 Rotation

If you have the Intuos3 Art Marker pen, you can use the Rotation setting to control the scattering and jitter. As you, erm, rotate the pen, you can decrease or increase the scatter.

Take control

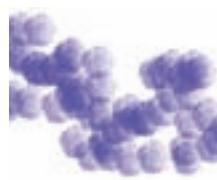
A few extra options



The Scatter and Count Jitter sliders also boast a drop-down Control menu. This houses a few other options, namely Fade, Pen Pressure, Pen Tilt, Stylus Wheel and Rotation. Fade alters the brush marks in the specified number of steps. The others all relate to pen control on a graphics tablet, which we look at in the side panel above. The image to the left shows the Fade effect.

Count setting

Don't lose count!



with a high Scatter setting. If you like the effect at the edges but want things to be a bit tighter in the middle, try increasing the Count slider to bolster the number of brush tips in a stroke. Hopefully this will do the trick!

The Count slider dictates the number of brush marks that get applied. If you double this up with the Scatter slider, you can fill in some of the gaps. Maybe you have a brush

As we've explained, the Scattering options allow you to spread the properties of a brush to create a completely different effect. The Count Jitter slider lets you set how much the brush marks differ between each occurrence. The higher the setting, the more variation. This can be great for quickly getting different effects from the same brush. You can also use the Control drop-down to alter behaviour.

Jittery behaviour

Variety is the spice of life



NEXT MONTH | WE GET TO PLAY WITH THE TEXTURE SETTINGS



Boost colours with the Photo Filter command

Photographers often use coloured filters to enhance a photo's hues – you can do exactly the same in Photoshop



photoshop is festooned with tools that mirror real-world counterparts, and the Photo Filters command is an excellent example of this.

The digital equivalent of filters that are put in front of a camera lens, Photo Filters allow you to tweak and improve the colour balance and temperature of an image, either as a whole or by targeting one particular hue. Found in the Adjustments area of the Image menu (or the Adjustments filters if you're an Elements user), they are a quick and easy way of tweaking colours or applying a totally different effect.

For more traditional edits, the Warming filter (85) and the Cooling filter (80) are painless

ways of fixing the white balance of a photo. If you have an image that looks yellowish, a quick blast of the Cooling filter will get things back on track by injecting some blue into the proceedings and evening matters up. The same (but in reverse) is true of the Warming filter. To get rid of colour casts, choose the complementary colour from the ones available.

However, you can also use the filters to bolster an image's colours, as we are doing here. By applying different filters to certain areas, it's possible to turn a lacklustre photo into a gloriously rich colour-fest. By working through this tutorial you'll see how the Photo Filters command is the perfect solution for when you want hassle-free image editing.



essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

Approximately
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Jo Cole

ON THE CD

Original photo

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

CREATING LAYERS
PHOTO FILTER COMMAND



AFTER



COLOUR ME GOOD

Colour correction the easy way

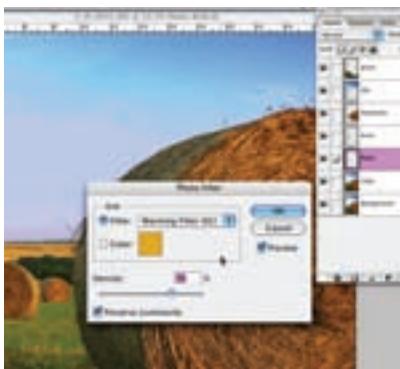


01 Start selecting

Open the hay on the CD. Create a copy of the background layer and name it 'Copy'. You need to select all the different areas on the image, so start with the grass. Select the grass area, copy and paste into a new layer. Name this 'Grass'. Now repeat with the trees, hay, sky, trees and field, placing each selection in its own layer. Remember to click on the 'Copy' layer when making your selection!



02 Sky captain With all your selections made, click on your 'Sky' layer. Go to Image>Adjustments>Photo Filters (Filter)>Adjustments>Photo Filters for PE users) and select the Cooling Filter (80) option. Set the Density to 35% to boost the blues, and click the Preserve Luminosity box to uncheck it. This will get rid of the bleached-out area of sky at the bottom. Click OK.



03 Playing the field Click on the 'Field' layer and call up the Photo Filter dialog once more. This time pick the Warming Filter (81) option and set it to 70%. The fields now look a lot more appetising! Click OK.

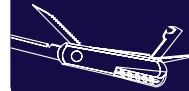
04 Tree surgeon Select the 'Trees' layer and open the Photo Filter. This time scroll down to the Green option and drag the Density slider to 10%. Also uncheck the Preserve Luminosity box. This darkens the trees, and will make the field and grass more striking. Click OK to continue.



06 Giant haystacks

Time for the most important part – the hay. Click their layer and pick Warming Filter (85). Move the Density slider to 72% for a really rich result, but keep the Preserve Luminosity box checked. Click OK to exit the Photo Filter dialog, and if happy, click the right arrow in the Layers palette, pick Flatten Image and save. If you think you may want to edit later, save as a layered .psd file.

Tool School

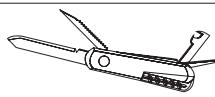


To preserve or not to preserve?

The Preserve Luminosity checkbox is worth experimenting with, because it can give you the exact effect you're after. If it's checked, the filters will keep the brightness in the image, so highlights etc will remain as they are. Uncheck this, and the filter is applied to all selected areas. Generally, if it's unchecked the result is darker and gives interesting results when applied to skies. So experiment with it!

05 Green, green grass of home Click the 'Grass' layer and pick the Green filter once more from the Photo Filter menu. This time, whack the Density slider up to 50% and uncheck the Preserve Luminosity box. This will result in a rich, intense green that matches the overall feel of the photo. Click OK again.

Tool tip
Pick your own colour



Although there are specific hue options available in the Photo Filter dialog, you can also set your own colours to be used as a filter. With the Photo Filter dialog open, click the colour square to bring up Photoshop's Color Picker. Now select a colour as normal, either by using the palette or entering specific values. When you click OK your colour will be used as a filter.





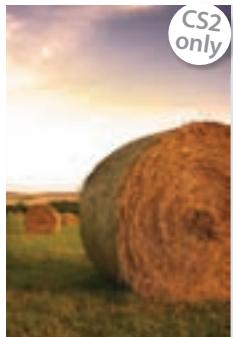
PHOTO FILTER OPTIONS IN FULL

You're spoilt for choice with this dazzling array of colours

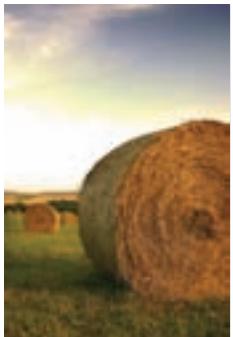
The different coloured filters are perfect for quick colour corrections, or to be used as the basis for a more intense image makeover. Here's a look at what they all do – each filter has been applied to the same image at 70% Density and Preserve Luminosity selected. Obviously the results can be increased or toned down.



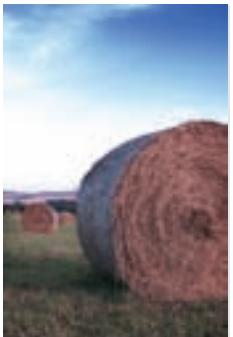
Warming filter 85



Warming filter (LBA)



Warming filter 81



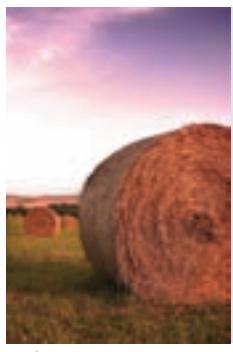
Cooling filter 80



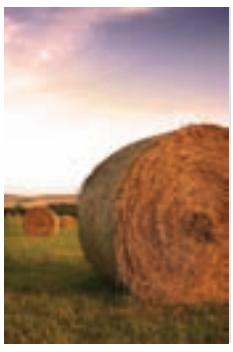
Cooling filter (LBB)



Cooling filter 82



Red



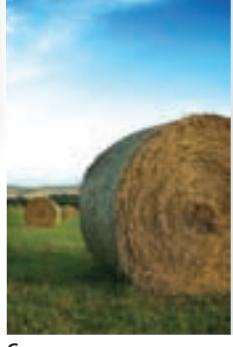
Orange



Yellow



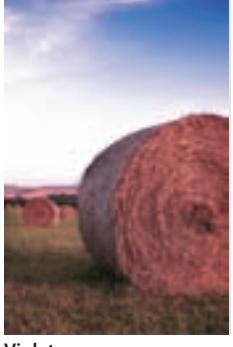
Green



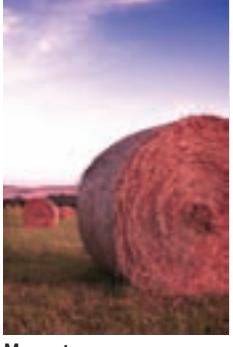
Cyan



Blue



Violet



Magenta



Sepia



Deep Red



Deep Blue



Deep Emerald



Deep Yellow



Underwater







KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn



- FILTERS
- BLENDING MODES
- PHOTO MANIPULATION
- BLUR
- DISTORTION

essentials

SKILL LEVEL



- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Expert

TIME TAKEN



- 1.5 hours

YOUR EXPERT



- Mark
- Shufflebottom

ON THE CD



- Component images

Create abstract digital imagery

A complex, abstract digital artwork featuring a dense grid of glowing white lines and geometric shapes against a dark purple background. The composition is dynamic, with lines forming various patterns that suggest circuitry or architectural structures.

Use Photoshop's powerful layers to create this composite abstract image from a variety of photos and user-created artwork



photoshop is great at touching up old images, reducing red eye, or cropping an unwanted person out of your holiday snaps. However, while

Photoshop can handle these tasks with ease, you won't really be putting it through its paces while giving it such easy jobs.

Photoshop was originally created to do simple photo manipulation, but even before the program hit the shelves it had caught the eye of those at Industrial Light and Magic, the special effects powerhouse behind *AI*, *Star Wars* and *Minority Report*. One of the first uses of Photoshop was on the film *The Abyss*. The special effects guys were using 3D software to create the animated water shapes and Photoshop for taking stills of the set and turning them into environmental reflections.

We're going to put Photoshop through its paces by going back to its roots and creating some science fiction-inspired abstract digital art. This kind of artwork is littered around the internet and can be found everywhere from interfaces to actual artwork. Most of the artists use complex 3D packages to get unusual geometry as the base of the composition. We'll use only Photoshop and some images of buildings and space to create our montage. By using regular photographs we can easily mimic this style of art, and prove that with some imagination, you can transform boring objects.

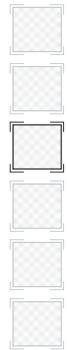
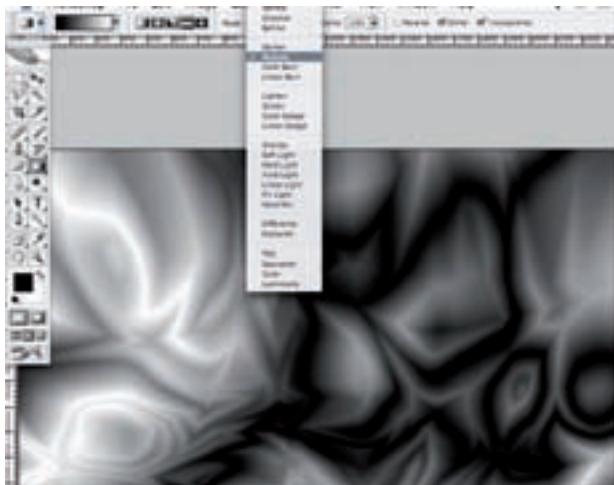


WORKS WITH | CS AND ABOVE

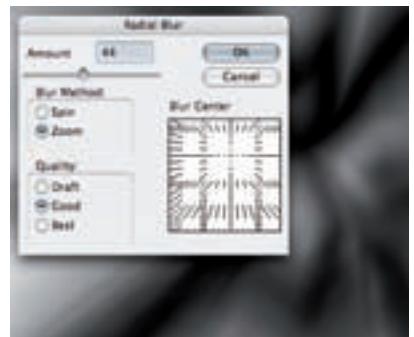
Web Resources

Finding digital abstract art

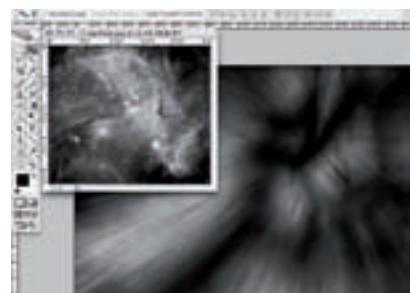
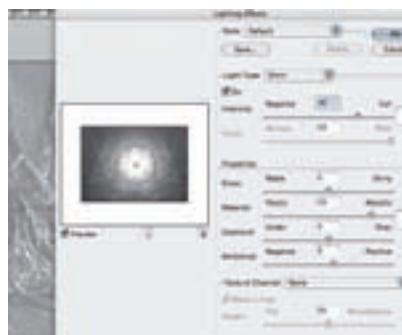
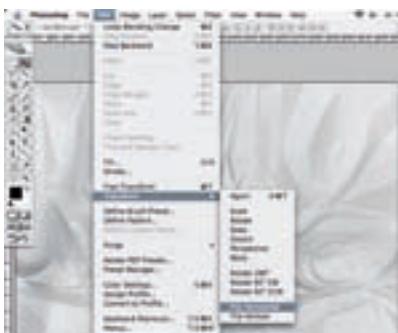
Whenever you create any digital abstract art, you need a little inspiration. The best way is to take a look at the work of other artists in the field. This will give you an idea of the kind of elements that can help create the artwork. The best site to feature this kind of artwork can be found at www.depthcore.com. Here the artwork has been themed into packs for perusing. If you fancy your creation, why not submit it for inclusion on the site?


FIRST STAGES
Creating your layers

01 Gradient backdrop

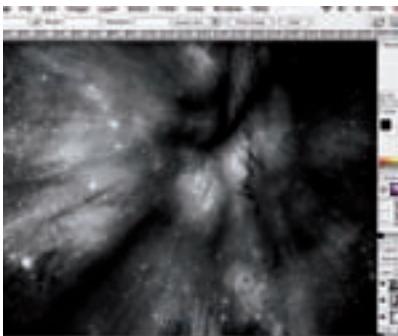
Create a new A4 Photoshop document, Landscape at 200pixels per inch. Hit D on the keyboard to set the colour to black and white, then choose the Gradient tool and add a linear gradient from left to right across the document. Set the mode to Difference and keep adding gradients until you get an interesting background.



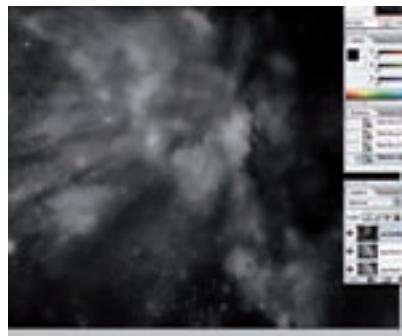
02 Copy the layer Drag the layer to the New Layer icon in the Layers palette to copy it. With the new copied layer selected, go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and add a zoom blur as shown. Rename the layer 'Background Zoom'. Change the blending mode to Difference.



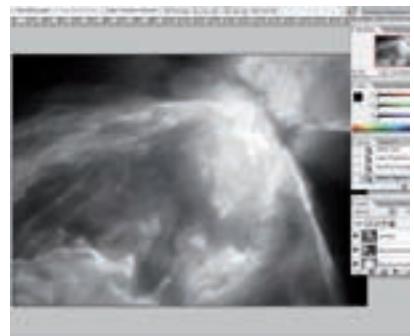
03 Change the background Turn off the visibility of Background Zoom and select the background layer. Go to Filter>Stylize>Find Edges, then open the Levels. Drag the black Levels slider up to increase the contrast. Duplicate this layer and then go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal.



04 Blend and merge Set the copied layer to Multiply and Shift-click the background layer, then merge. Go to Filter>Artistic>Plastic Wrap. Increase the Smoothness to 15 and hit Apply. Now go to Filter>Render>Lighting Effects and add an Omni light as shown.



05 Zoom blur Go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and add a zoom blur as in step two. Rename this layer 'Background Zoom 2'. Set the transparency to 80% and turn on the visibility of Background Zoom. Next, open 'stars.jpg' from our CD and then choose Image>Adjustments>Desaturate. If you haven't got CS2, use the Hue/Saturation dialog to grey it out



06 Drag the image Drag the star image onto the composition. Rename the layer 'Starfield' in the composition and go to Edit>Transform>Scale. Now scale the image down as shown above and, finally, change the blending mode to Overlay.

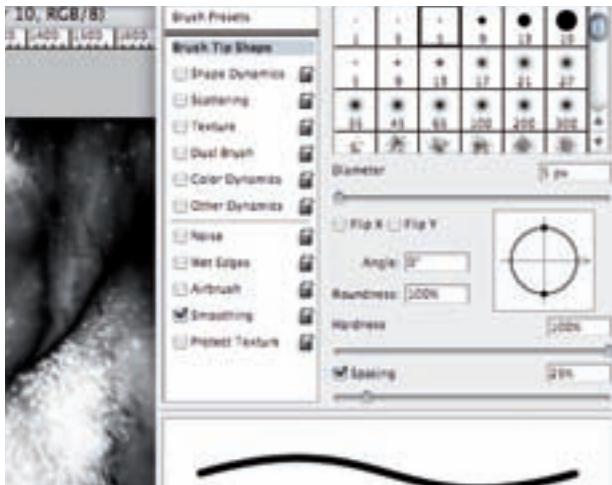
07 Blurring the boundaries Copy the 'Starfield' layer and name it 'Starfield Blur'. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and add a 25-pixel blur. Open 'constellation.jpg' from our CD and again desaturate. Drag to the main composition. Resize the image to fit the document again.

08 Rename the layer Name the layer 'Constellation', and then change the opacity to 50% and change the blending mode to Color Dodge. Open 'space.jpg' from the CD and desaturate, then drag across onto the composition and resize to fit the document.



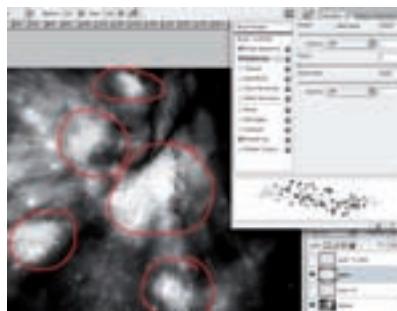
THE COLOUR PURPLE

Blend, blur and merge the layers

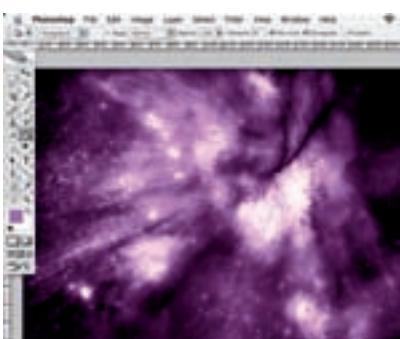


09 Blend the whole composition

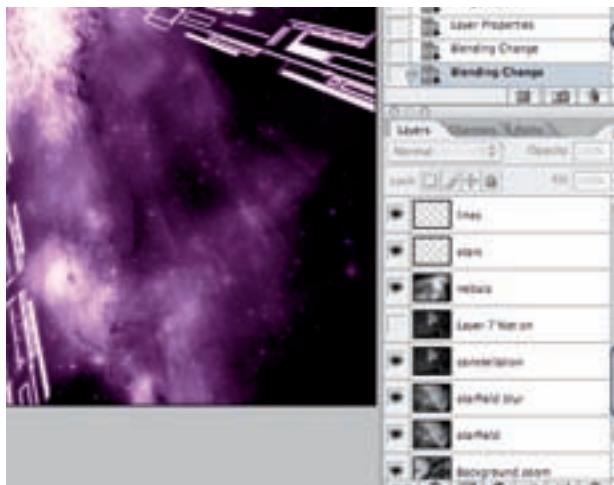
Rename the layer 'Nebula' and change the blending mode to Soft Light, reducing the opacity to 50%. Create a new layer and name it 'Stars'. Click on the Brush tool, pick a 5px hard brush and set white as the foreground colour. Open the Brush settings and copy as shown.



10 Set the brush Your next step is to click on the Shape Dynamics checkbox and increase the Size Jitter to 100%. Now click on the Scattering checkbox then increase the Scatter to 1000% and the Scatter Jitter to 100%. Draw stars on the document, as marked in the screenshot above, using the brush.



11 Add a zoom blur Go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and choose Zoom Blur, but take the blur down to around 12 pixels and keep the zoom centre as before. Now click OK. Create a new layer and fill it with the colours red 165, green 107 and blue 163. Set the blending mode to Color.



14 Duplicate the image Duplicate the original 'Lines' layer again and rotate the image as shown. Change the blending mode to Normal. Copy the layer again and leave this one on Overlay. Now select the last two layers of the 'Lines' layers by Shift-clicking each one. Finally, merge the layers together.

Expert Tip



Glowing blurs

One of the elements that characterises digital abstract art is that much of the imagery which makes up the final composition has glowing blurred edges. The easy way to achieve this is to take a copy of the layer and add a Gaussian blur of around 4 to 8 pixels. Once this is done, reduce the opacity of the copied, blurred layer, and if it's positioned under a coloured wash, the edges should take on the tint of that colour.

Expert Tip



Wave of light

Creating wavy lines of light is a breeze with Photoshop's Wave filter. This automatically adds a wavy warp to any image you apply it to. It can be used to make the backgrounds very interesting, but also to make electric currents as in this tutorial. To try and draw those lines by hand would be near impossible, but the Wave filter gives just the right effect. Experiment with this by adding both more and less of a wave to see the results.

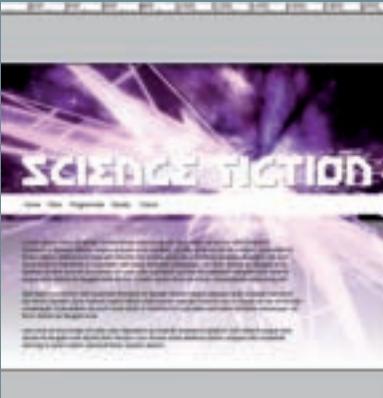




Try something different

Give your imagination a free rein!

Abstract art such as this works very well in its own right, but it is very accommodating for other purposes. Science fiction fans will find it gives a nice backdrop to web pages, while home movie makers might adopt the style for their DVD menus. It also works well as a desktop, as seen in our Desktops section on this issue's disc. Obviously you can just print it out and admire it too!



01 **Web page** You'll be able to find a great many uses for your finished image. For example, it could be used as a background for a web page. You can easily adapt the image for use in a standard HTML page or even animate some of those pulsing electric veins in Flash.

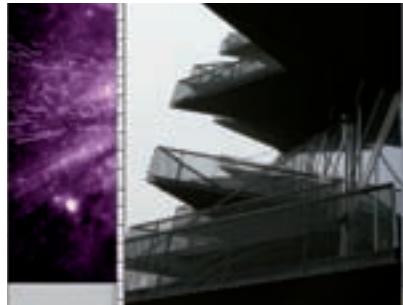
02 **DVD menu** If the web isn't your thing, then what about making an archive of video clips or TV shows by burning them to DVD? The image can be turned into a DVD menu – which will particularly suit a sci-fi theme with the abstract nature of the image.

03 **Get a print** Of course, if creating something else with your image seems like a bit too much work after following the tutorial, you can always turn it into a print. Did you know that you can get a 20x30-inch image printed for just £11.00 at PixMania online?

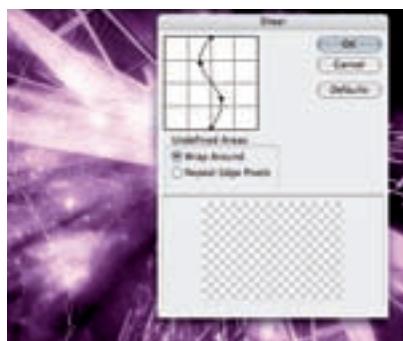


MAKING WAVES

Create bolts of 'electricity' inside a building



16 **Add architecture** Open the 'building.jpg' image from this issue's CD. Inverse it and use the Polygonal Marquee tool to select the area as shown above. Drag this across to the composition and rename the layer 'Building'. Change the blending mode to Hard Light, then choose Edit>Transform>Distort.



18 **More architecture** Duplicate both the layers again and then rotate them as shown. Now rename the layers 'Building 1' through to 'Building 4'. Create a new layer, select a 3-pixel brush and set the foreground colour to white. Hold down Shift in order to draw a straight line down the length of the document.



20 **Duplicate the layer** Create two copies of this layer and use the Distort tool to move their positions so that the area in the centre of the buildings appears to have three electricity bolts protruding. Merge these layers together and rename it 'Electricity'. Now duplicate this layer and name it 'Electricity 2'.

21 **Flip and distort** With the 'Electricity 2' layer selected, go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal. Choose Edit>Transform>Distort. Move the image as shown above. Merge the two layers together. Copy the merged Electricity layer and rename this 'Electricity 2'. Copy the layer again and add a 4-pixel Gaussian blur.





FINAL TOUCHES

Add some highlights and check the colouring



22 Soft-edged brush Name the last layer 'Electricity Blur'. Now add a new layer and name it 'Electricity Highlights'. Select the Brush tool and grab a 60-pixel soft-edged brush, then paint in white highlights around the electricity. When you done, reduce the opacity of the layer to 70%.



23 Colour changes All the layers created so far should be underneath the purple wash of colour we created in step 11. If not, move everything below this. Rename the purple-coloured layer 'Purple Wash'. Create a new layer and place this above the Purple layer, naming it 'Blue Light 1'.



24 Paint highlights Change the foreground colour to red 193, green 198 and blue 255. Using the same brush as before, paint in highlights as shown in the screenshot above. When you are done, change the blending mode to Overlay. The lines will turn into blue highlights, giving more depth to the image.

25 More highlights Add a new layer and name this one 'Blue Light 2'. Next, increase the size of the brush to around 200 pixels and then reduce the opacity to 30%. Paint areas of blue around the image as you see fit, in order to add some more depth. Finally, change the blending mode to Multiply.

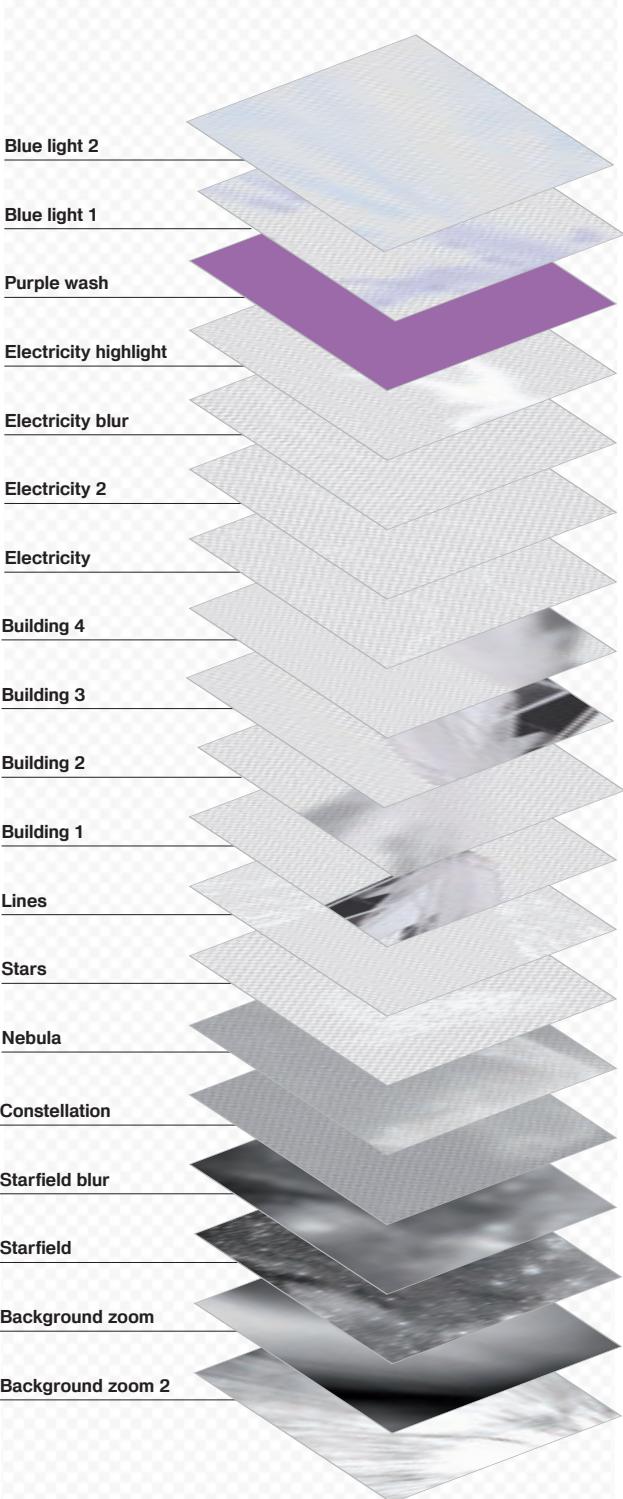


26 Save the image Save your image now as a Photoshop document that's ready for use in a wide range of media. Feel free to amend any of the elements that you have seen in use – which will give you a unique piece of work.



Making abstract art

How the layers stacked up





Transform tools

Warp, stretch, distort, resize... just some of the Transform commands you can apply to photographs, graphics and text

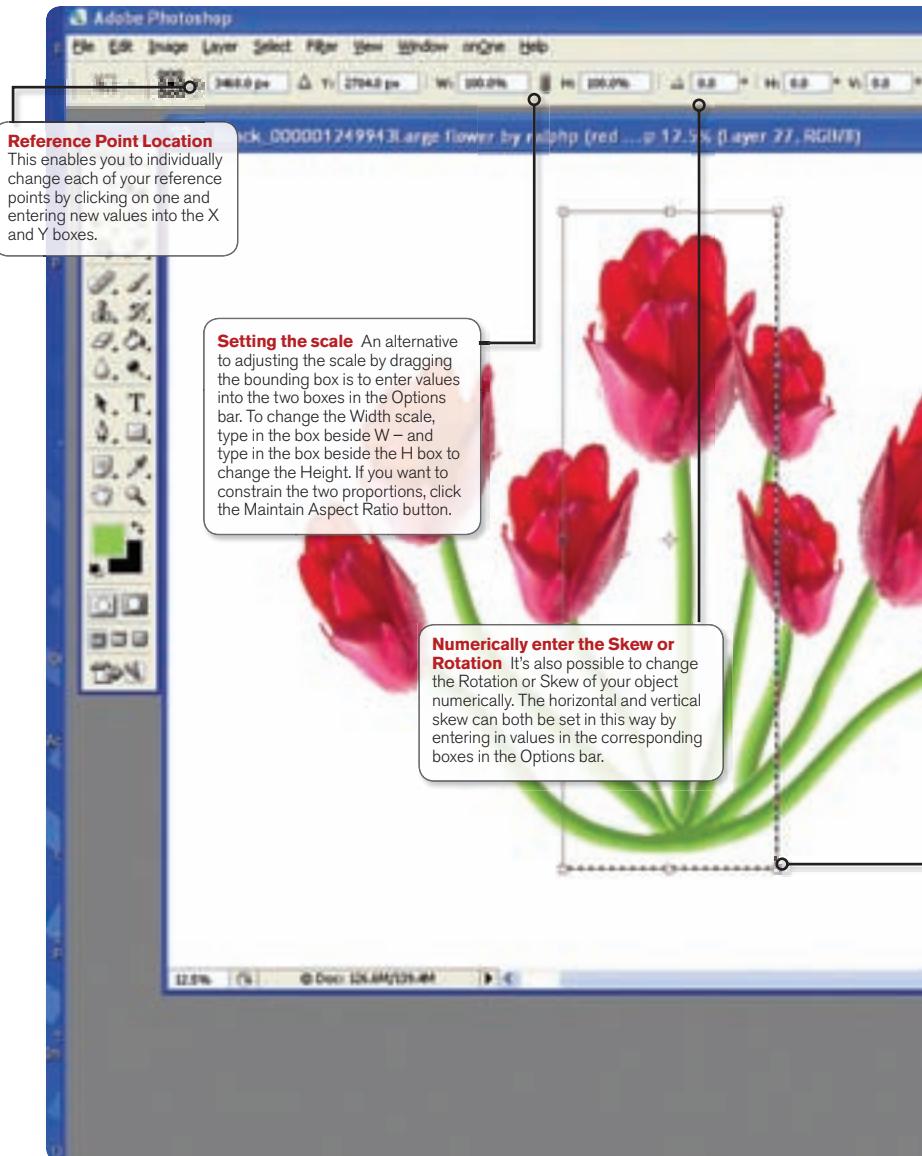


Each of the Transform tools modify an object's appearance in some way. Transformations aren't limited to single images – they are also applicable to text, a single layer, multiple layers or selections.

To apply a transformation, choose what you'd like to transform. For example, to apply a transformation to part of a layer, select the layer in the Layers palette and then use one of the selection tools to select part of that layer. To transform multiple layers, highlight the layers you want in the Layers palette, then select Layer>Link Layers. Once you've selected a Transform command from the Edit>Transform menu, a bounding box with handles appears around your selection. Depending on the type of transformation you've chosen, dragging the handles will change the item's appearance.

By selecting Free Transform from the Transform menu, or pressing Ctrl+T (PC) or Apple+T (Mac), you are able to alter the rotation, skew, scale, distortion and perspective in one go. It's therefore possible to choose Scale, drag handles to scale it, then choose Rotate to spin it.

Transformations cannot be applied to the background layer. However, this is easily solved and then you will have endless fun spinning, distorting and twisting away!



Scale

The most commonly used Transform command



The Scale tool changes the size of the image, letting you either enlarge or reduce an item. You can scale horizontally, vertically, or both. To begin scaling, select the area or item to be transformed. If working on layers, make sure the right layer is active. Now choose Edit>Transform>Scale and drag one of the handles to resize it. If you want to resize the object proportionally, hold down Shift while dragging. After you've resized, a box will appear asking if you want to accept the transformation. If happy, click Accept. An alternative to scaling by dragging is to scale numerically by entering percentages into the Width and Height boxes in the Options bar. By clicking Maintain Aspect Ratio, the proportions you enter will be relative to each other.



Rotate

Spin it around



Rotate turns an item around a reference point. When rotating, you can adjust the rotate centre point by clicking and dragging it to a new position which can be outside the bounding box. Entering values in the Rotation box in the Options bar lets you set precise amounts for the rotation. To rotate an object, text or image, move the cursor outside the selection, and it will change to a double-pointed arrow. This indicates the directions you can rotate the item in. To rotate an image by half a turn, select Rotate 180°. Pick Rotate 90° CW or 90° CCW to rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise by a quarter.



Switch between modes This button is useful for when you want to carry out multiple types of transformation. It allows you to move between Warp modes and Free Transform mode, giving you access to all forms of transformation.

Handles, arrows and centre points If you prefer not to enter values numerically, drag the handles of your image in order to transform it. These are found on the sides or corners of your image once you've entered the Transform mode, depending on the type of transformation you are carrying out. When rotating, you'll also be referring to the centre point, because it's the point the rotation circles around. This can be moved easily by dragging it.

Tip



Hide or display

If you want to hide the bounding box to see the transformation you have made to your item more clearly, press **Ctrl+H** (PC) or **Apple+H** (Mac), and it will disappear. The bounding box will reappear if you press the keys again.

Tip



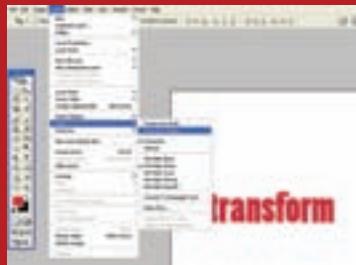
Save time

The Free Transform keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+T** (PC) or **Apple+T** (Mac). Pressing Shift with the Free Transform key command applies the last transformation setting again. This can be useful when trying to move two objects by an equal amount.

Perspective

Add perspective without text looking blurry

Perspective Transform makes part of an image appear to be moving closer or further away from you – but to use it, a few processes need to be carried out first.



01 Type in text

First type the text on a blank canvas. You can't apply the Perspective command to text as it is: it must be changed to a shape. Go to Layer>Type>Convert to Shape. Make sure the text is correct, as it won't be editable.



02 Transform

Transform the perspective via Edit>Transform Path>Perspective. If placed over a corner handle, the pointer becomes a grey arrow. Reposition these handles, as you want them to apply the shape's perspective transformation.



03 Rasterize

The final step is to rasterize the shape to remove the shape path and make it look sharper. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Shape. This is done at the end to stop it looking blurry. The text will look as if it's gradually disappearing into the distance.

Skew

A different slant



Skew is used to bend an object vertically or horizontally and make it appear to be leaning. If you move the mouse over a side handle, it turns white and a small double-headed arrow appears. Click the centre of one of the sides of the bounding box and move it to one side to slant the image. The parallel sides stay the same but the corner angles will change. If you slant the image while pressing **Ctrl+Alt** (PC) or **Apple+Alt** (Mac), the object will remain centred. Hold **Ctrl+Shift** (PC) or **Apple+Shift** (Mac) while skewing to preserve the object's size.



Distort

Bend and shape



Distort bends and pushes an item any way you want, and gives it a twisted look. If you hold down **Ctrl** (PC) or **Apple** (Mac) while dragging a corner handle, the corners will be distorted independently. This works by altering the angles of the corners of the bounding box – perfect for stretching in all directions. If you want the centre point to remain constant, hold down **Alt**.



Warp it

Manipulate the shape of an item

Warping type makes it possible to bend an image or text. But to warp type you must first select a type layer. Selecting **Edit>Transform>Warp** will bring up a grid over the image or text. Clicking on one of the points in the grid and dragging it will warp the underlying image to follow where you've dragged. It's also possible to choose one of the preset styles from the Warp Style pull-down menu. After choosing from the menu, you can still drag the control points. If you're in Free Transform mode, it's easy to change to Warp by clicking the **Switch Between Free Transform and Warp Modes** button in the Options bar. To change the reference point, click one of the dots on the Reference Point Locator in the Options bar.



Use patterns to create an invitation

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

About one hour

YOUR EXPERT

Louise Brangwin

ON THE CD

Fabric scans and sketches

Get your special occasion off to the right start by creating a bespoke invitation design that's sure to impress!



Spring is definitely in the air, and if you or a friend have a birthday party coming up soon, how about giving it that extra something by designing your own unique and imaginative invitations reflecting this **time of year?** Photoshop has an arsenal of powerful tools that will help you get exactly the look you're after, and we'll show you just how to make the most of them.

Using sketches and printmaking patterns provided on the CD, you will learn the techniques of building up a design.

Through the simple process of layering and repeating basic motifs, you'll soon be able to create something very ornate and decorative. We'll then show you in easy-to-follow steps how to make the line-drawn designs burst with texture and colour, using simple techniques of cutting and pasting from scans of fabrics and textures.

You'll also discover how tools such as the Magic Wand and Magnetic Lasso can make all the difference to your designs, and exactly how to use them. Besides all this, you will find out how to apply pattern and texture to everyday fonts to make them

unique, and how to coordinate the colours of text with the colours in the design.

By the time you've finished this tutorial you'll have made an individual party invitation, perhaps different from anything you may have thought a computer-generated design would look like! You'll then be able to design your own invitations, and will have the knowledge for using your drawings to create something really personal. Please note that because there is a lot of copying and pasting, the layer structure at the end just shows where the main layers need to be.

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

BLENDING MODES
PATTERNS
TEXT

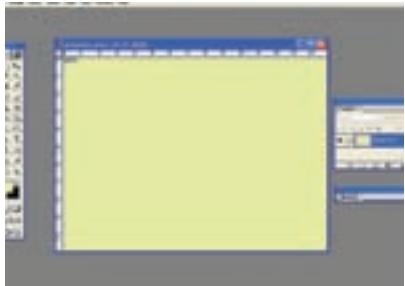
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7.0 AND ABOVE



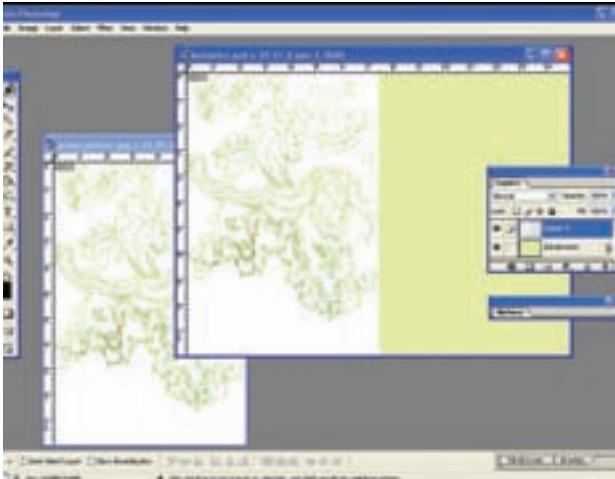


YOU'RE INVITED!

Getting your invitation factory started

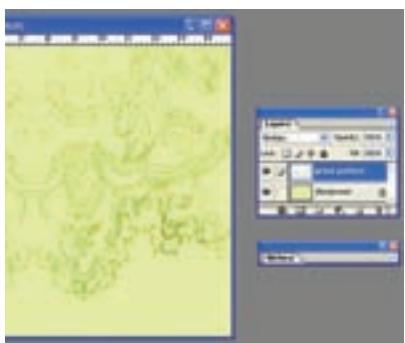


01 Create the background Create a new file that's 150mm wide by 110mm high. Make sure it's in RGB mode and is 300dpi and call it 'invitation'. Click on the Foreground square in the toolbar to bring up the Color Picker window. Select a fresh pale yellow/cream and fill the template using the Paint Bucket in the toolbar. Open the 'Green Pattern' file provided on the CD.

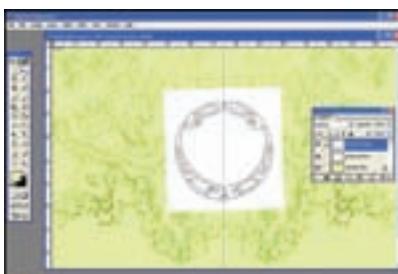


02 Add the pattern

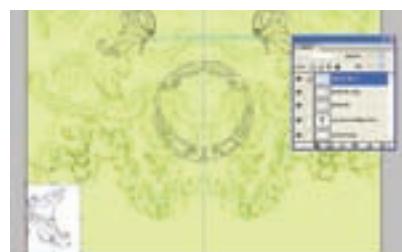
Drag the pattern onto the invitation background and line up the edge with the top left corner. A new layer is automatically created. To create a mirror image, right-click on the Layer palette > Duplicate Layer. The pattern is repeated on top. Go to Edit > Free Transform, then click and hold on the middle left anchor point and drag to the right until aligned with the edge.



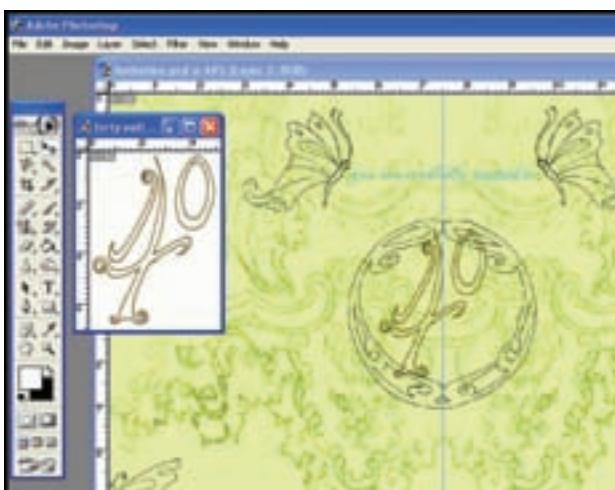
03 Layer style Next, go to Layer > Merge Down. On the Layer palette, double-click Layer 1 and rename it Green Pattern. Instead of using the Normal blending mode, select the Multiply option. Now the background colour shows through the white areas.



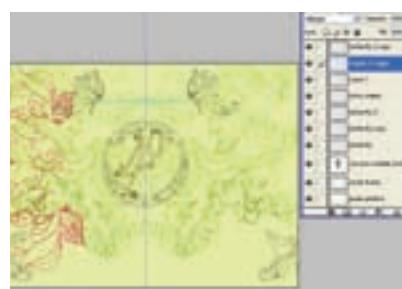
04 Central circle Open 'Circle Frame' from the CD. Drag it to the invitation and rename the new layer Circle Frame. To centralise, go to View > Rulers – measurements appear around the invitation. Using the cursor, click and drag from the left. Place the blue line halfway across at 7.5cm. Via Edit > Free Transform, you can align the circle by moving and angling it. Select Multiply as the blending mode.



05 You are invited... Pick the Text tool and select a font from the top bar. We chose Blackadder ITC, 14pt, but you can pick any you like. Write some text in a bright blue; use the ruler line to centralise. Open 'Butterfly' from the CD and drag it on. Select Multiply as the mode, resize and angle it via Edit > Free Transform. Rename the layer Butterfly, right-click and duplicate it. Go to Edit > Free Transform and pull across to mirror the first butterfly. Do the same with 'Butterfly 2'.



06 ...to a 40th Open the sketch 'Forty Outline' and position it in the central circle. Change the layer style to Multiply so you can see the circle. Layer numbers can become confusing, so to keep track of the sketches you drag on, always remember to name the new layers; call this one Forty Outline.



07 Building a border Open the 'Border Print' file from the CD and drag it into the top left corner. Use Edit > Free Transform to scale it up to overlap the butterfly wing and come down to the middle. Set Multiply as the mode. Now duplicate this layer and make it slightly larger than the first via Edit > Free Transform. Move the layer up so it overlaps slightly with the first – you don't want gaps.

Expert Tip



Quick layer selection for Pasting Into

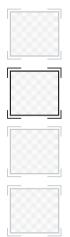
Each time you select an area of pattern and Edit > Paste Into, a new masked layer of that shape is created. With this invitation design, many layers are produced by pasting fabric into the border, so merge down when you can. Remember to get back on the Border layer before selecting another area of pattern. Rather than scrolling through the long list in the Layer palette, it's easier to right-click on the screen area you want to work on. A list of the layers in that area appears by the cursor, and you can select the one you want.

Resources



Sourcing and creating patterns

It's easy to create a really decorative background using pattern sketches. Make your own sketches from things you see around you such as fabrics and clothing. You only need to draw a small area and scan it in. Then see what you can create by duplicating the layer and using Edit > Free Transform to tessellate a larger pattern.





Expert Tip



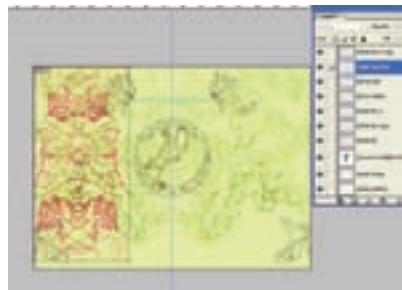
Mode experiments

Once you have made a pattern and scanned it in, you can experiment with how blending modes affect the colours. If you fill the background layer with colour, the modes will work differently from when the drawing is on a white background. When building up various modes in a design, stop every so often and move the layer orders to see what changes happen. You might discover an effect you wouldn't have been able to create if you'd been trying!



MORE BORDER

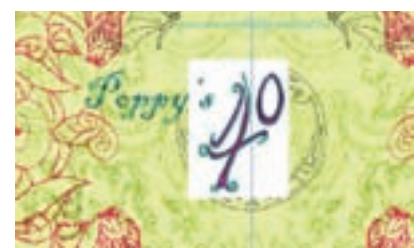
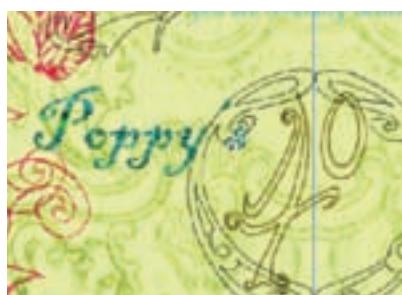
Easy to build up



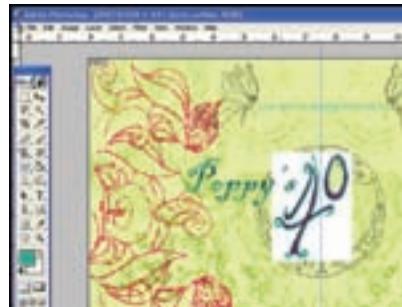
08 Mirroring the border Now use Layer>Merge Down so the two become one; rename it Left Border. Duplicate this layer and name it Right Border. You can get the exact size in a mirror image via Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal. Drag to the right-hand edge. Go to Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast and put the Contrast up to +31 on both layers.



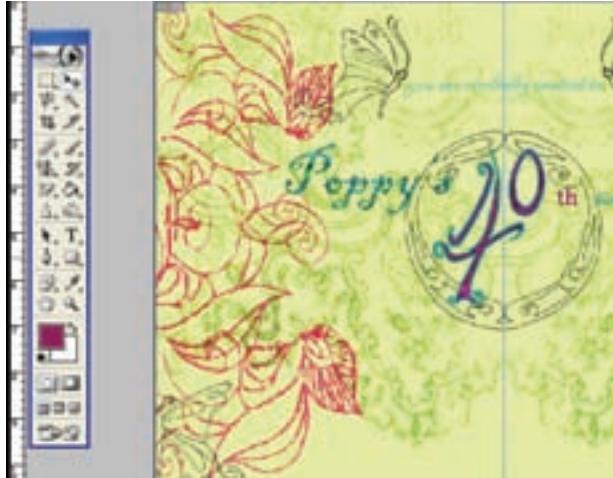
09 Poppy's party Click on the Type tool on the toolbar. The same font and colour you previously used will be stored. Change the size to 36pt and write 'Poppy'. To make the writing more interesting we placed fabric scans within the letters to create texture. To do this, first use the Magic Wand cursor and click inside a letter to select it.



10 The Magic Wand Open 'Vintage Blue Fabric' from the disc and use the Rectangular Marquee tool to select an area. Go to Edit>Copy, and click on the Invitation window. Hit Edit>Paste Into, and the fabric pattern will appear in the area you selected. Go to Edit>Free Transform, and move around and resize until you're happy with the pattern placement. Use Linear Burn as the mode.



11 Patterns within text A new layer is created each time you hit Edit>Paste Into. Make sure you click back on Poppy's layer after the P is filled. Select the O using the Magic Wand. Go to Edit>Paste Into, and the same design will be repeated. Linear Burn the new layer, and click back to Poppy's layer to continue the process with the remaining letters.



12 Patterns within a drawing Click the Forty Outline layer. Change the mode to Normal. Go to Filter>Sketch>Photocopy and use the Darkness slider to thicken the sketch lines. Use the Paint Bucket to fill them with turquoise. Select a segment with the Magic Wand, then open 'Purple Print' from the CD. Using the Rectangular Marquee tool, select an area and Edit>Copy it. Click back to the Invitation window, go to Edit>Paste Into then Edit>Free Transform.

14 Colouring text using the Ink Dropper Type 'th' with Georgia, 14pt, then highlight. Click in the Font Color box to use the Ink Dropper tool and click on a colour inside the 40. The font will change to match. Leave a space and change the text to Blackadder ITC 15pt. Type 'Birthday party', and again use the Ink Dropper to select a green found inside Poppy's name.

Tool School



Adjusting your sketches

It's easier to fill areas of a drawing made of solid lines that join up. However, you can use the Magnetic Lasso tool to cling to the edges where there is a gap, and when it's joined you can paste it into. To thicken edges, go to Filter>Stylize>Find Edges. The thicker lines can be filled with the Paint Bucket. Alternatively, select the outline colour and go to Filter>Sketch>Photocopy.

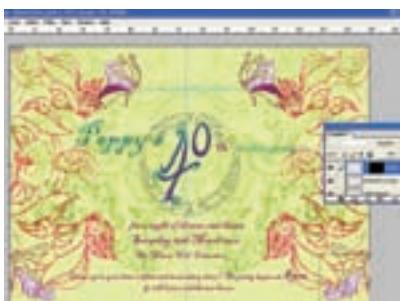
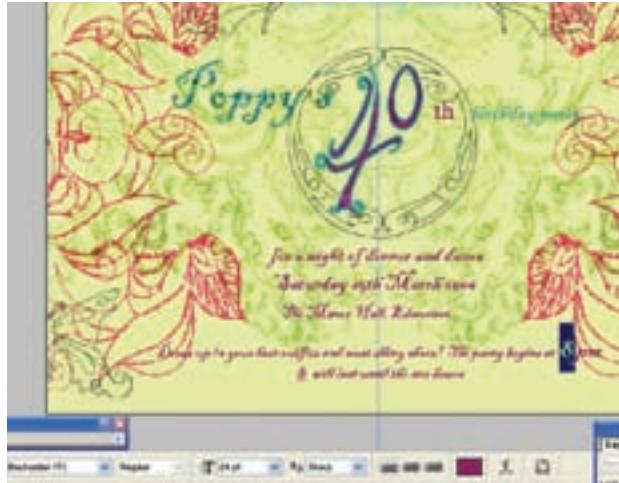


NOTES TRY SOME OF THE OTHER PATTERNS ON THE CD IN THIS TUTORIAL



TEXTURED PARADISE

Liven up design with real-life textures



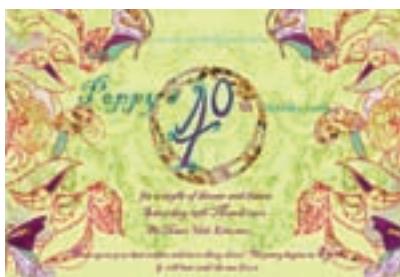
16 Butterflies Select the Butterfly layer and prepare the sketch outlines; Filter>Sketch>Photocopy>Detail>1 will keep the lines fine and turns them purple. Go to Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast to turn the contrast up and darken the lines more. Select the layer Butterfly Copy, then Butterfly 2 and Butterfly 2 Copy, and do the same with each one.



18 Fill border Use the Paint Bucket to fill small areas of the butterflies; select colours by placing the Ink Dropper over areas of the pasted fabrics. Select the Border layer, use the Magic Wand to pick a segment, then go to Edit>Paste Into. Change the opacity to 70%. Use the Magic Wand on another segment of the layer (see tip 1). Open a CD texture you haven't used, select an area then Edit>Copy.

15 Font sizes Start a text layer on the left below the circle. Type all remaining text in one size: 18pt. It's easier to then highlight each line to make it gradually smaller. Change the size of the descending lines from 18pt to 11pt, using the Font menu bar along the base of the screen.

17 Adding texture and colour Start on the Butterfly layer. Use the Magic Wand to select an area of wing. (You can follow the colouring we've used, or use each of the textures and colours provided on the CD where you like). Open 'Floral Print', select an area with the Rectangular Marquee, then Edit>Copy it. Back on the invitation, go to Edit>Paste Into. Do another area with 'Purple Print'.

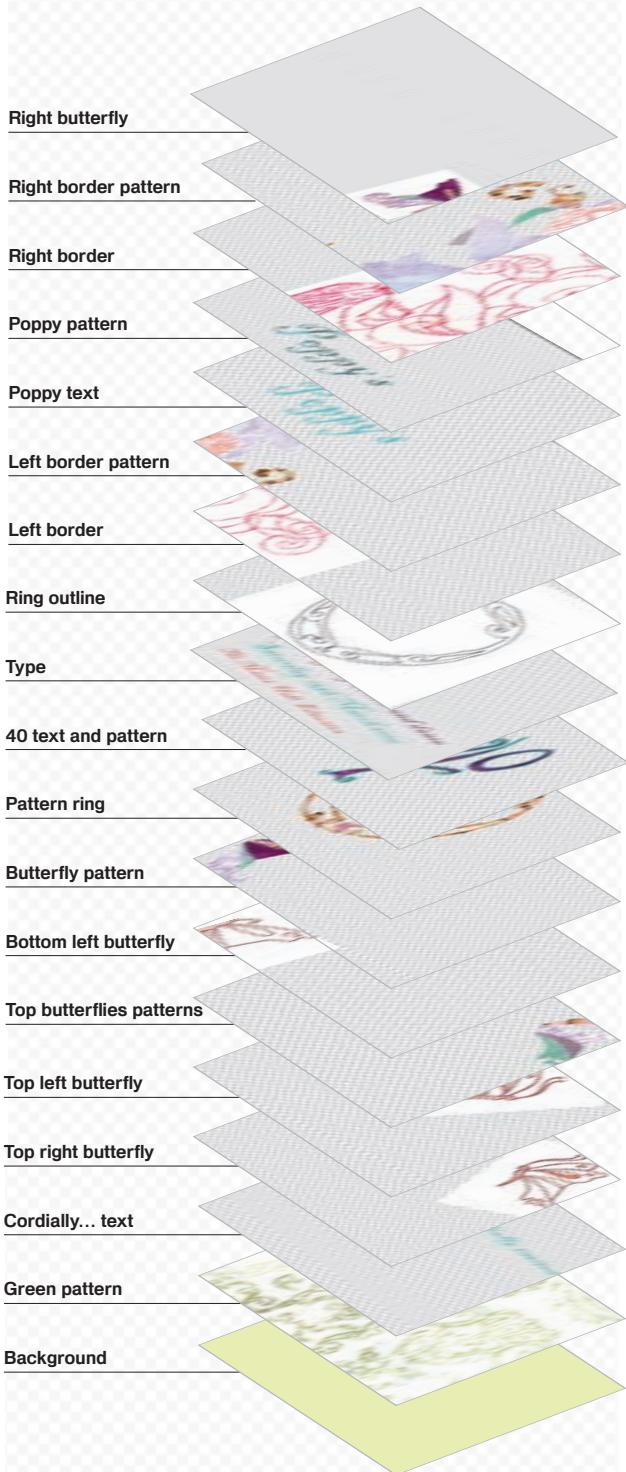


19 Finishing touches Edit>Paste into the border and change the blending mode. Continue the cycle until you like the result, or follow our design. Select Circle Frame layer, Magic Wand, Edit>Paste Into. Now delete Circle Frame to leave the texture. To make the text coordinate with the invitation colours, highlight the 'Saturday...' text line. Click on the Font Color box; select a colour from the border. Do the same with the location text.



A special invitation

Go the extra mile with your party





BEFORE



AFTER

Sharpen photos with FocalBlade

Sharpen up your blurry photographs with this easy-to-use plug-in – now available for Mac as well!



FocalBlade is the definitive sharpening tool. Not only is it brilliant at creating a sharpened effect, but it also creates blurring and soft focus.

Originally only available for Windows, a Mac version has now been released. FocalBlade achieves fine results even on images of low quality, and can also increase noise and remove quality if required. The plug-in is flexible and easy to use, delivering top quality results in easy steps. There's also the option to use the Brush feature to paint in your image enhancement if you want to have slightly more input.

The speed at which FocalBlade performs is impressive. The amount of control you have over the sharpening of an image using the sliders is also exceptional, as you can sharpen edges and surfaces independently. When

extreme sharpening occurs, the plug-in doesn't produce halos, as many other sharpening tools do. FocalBlade is ideal for sharpening photos for both screen and print display.

FocalBlade isn't limited to sharpening images; it can also produce impressive blur, soft focus and glow effects. It combines many methods of sharpening photos without the side effects, while offering a great deal of control. It can also enhance the finest details with radius values below 0.1 pixels, and sharpen highly blurred details with sharpen amounts of up to an impressive 2000%. We will mainly focus on how the plug-in can be used to sharpen or deblur photographs.

For more information on FocalBlade or to purchase a copy for \$49.95, visit The Plugin Site at www.thepuginsite.com. Alternatively, enter our competition on the next page.



BANISH THE BLUR

Explore FocalBlade's enhancement capabilities

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

Approximately
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Zoe Mutter

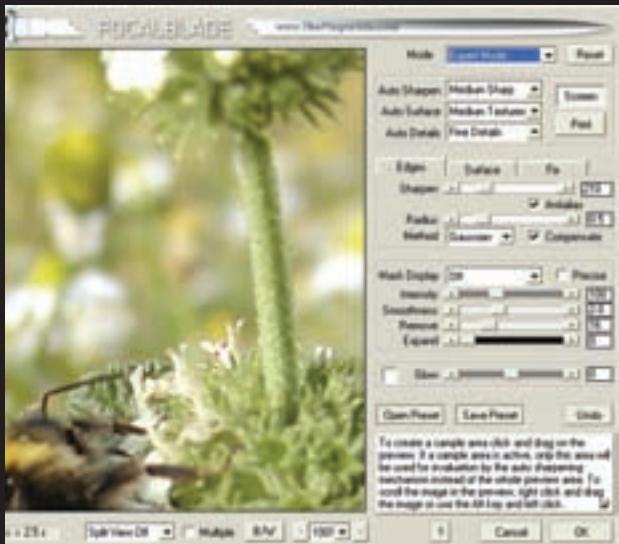


01 Only RGB or Greyscale

FocalBlade will only work on RGB and Greyscale images. Convert into RGB 8 bit or RGB 16 bit if you have a CMYK image or one with 256 colours or less. Place FocalBlade in the Plug-Ins folder. Open Photoshop: go to Filter>PhotoWiz>FocalBlade 1.04.



02 Choose your mode To sharpen images quickly, select Novice Mode from the Mode pull-down. We recommend Expert mode for more advanced operations, or to deblur a photo simply select DeBlur or DeBlur Pro. Make sure you're in the right mode for the job. Click Reset to set it to the default values, and select either Screen or Print depending on what the image will be used for.



03 Move about your image

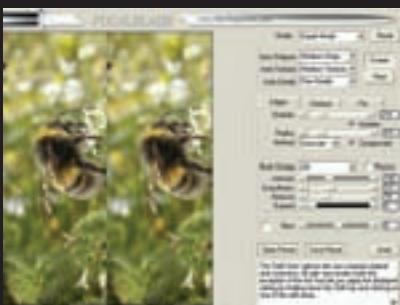
To create a sample area, click and drag over the area you want in the Preview window. If a sample area is active, only this part is used by the auto-sharpening mechanism for evaluation. To scroll around the image, simply right-click it (or use the Alt key) to drag and reposition it so the area you want is in view.

Tip

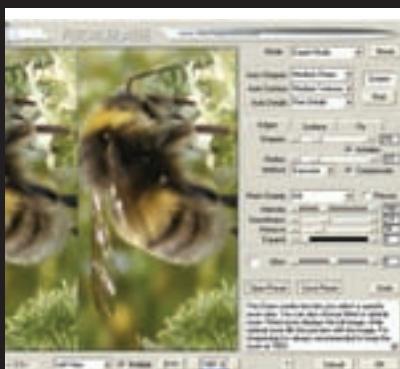


View using B/W mode for more clarity

Do not ignore the B/W setting when working on an RGB image. By clicking it you can often see the detail more clearly, then unselect it when you have finished. It's particularly useful when selecting sharpness settings for your image.



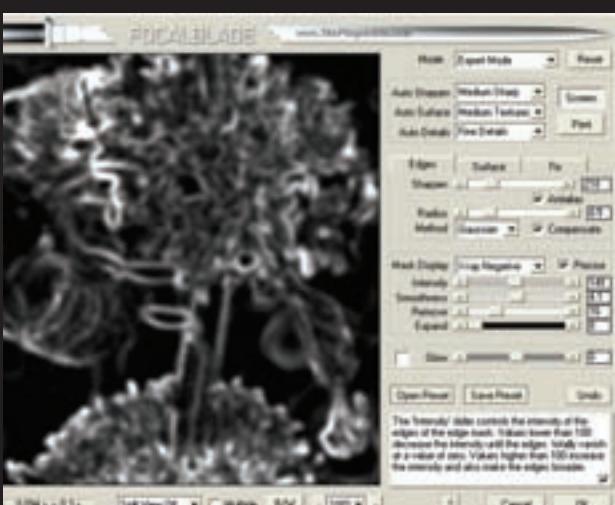
04 Get a better view Select from the three Auto pull-down menus. Detailed sharpening occurs later, using the Edges and Surface tabs. Tick Auto Preview for adjustments to update in the Preview window. Choose Split View to compare the original with the sharpened image. A Split View option must be selected for the Multiple checkbox to become active, making comparisons easier, as the same part of the image repeats in both sections.



05 Optimal zoom, optimal results The Zoom pull-down menu presents different ratios for you to choose from, including fitting the image into the Preview screen. To see your adjustments clearly, it's best to keep the image at optimal zoom (100%) when adjusting.



06 Sharpening selectively The Mask Display box offers ways to display the edge mask, used for selectively sharpening or blurring the image. You control which areas will be sharpened with the settings selected from the Edges and Surfaces tabs. The mask clearly displays areas belonging to the surface or edge selections. For example, the X-ray Negative option displays outlines in black and the surface in white.



07 What intensity?

The Intensity slider adjusts the intensity of edges of the edge mask. At 100, edges will be at full intensity and at their widest and boldest. Smooth out the edge mask using the Smoothness slider. Don't set it too high, as edges become smoother and also thicker. Increasing the Remove slider reduces the edges. Alternatively, the Expand slider expands the edges.



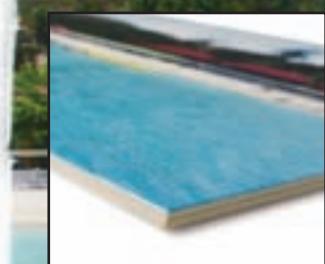
08 Sharpening – the most important part Sliders in the Edges and Surfaces tabs enable easy sharpening. Sharpen, Soften and Radius are the main settings that alter image clarity. The Surfaces tab enables surface sharpening, and Edges lets you sharpen edges. The Method pull-down presents different sharpening methods. The Sharpen slider alters intensity of the sharpness, and Radius changes the size of enhanced details.

Win yourself a full version of FocalBlade

The Plugin Site has offered to give away copies of FocalBlade to five lucky readers. The plug-in, worth \$49.95, can be yours if you answer this simple question: What percentage can highly blurred details be sharpened up to using FocalBlade? Email your answers to PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk by 16 April 2006.



The tiles offer great colour reproduction



The tile's finish makes them very durable



Each tile comes individually wrapped



KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

START THE ORDER PROCESS
WORK THROUGH THE PRINT OPTIONS

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
 Intermediate
 Expert

TIME TAKEN

10 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Jo Cole



Print photos to ceramic tiles

Liven up your living space by getting your artwork or photos printed onto tiles



hen considering new ways of printing your images, your first thoughts probably swing towards canvases and large digital

prints. But there's a vast array of choices when it comes to getting images out of your computer and into the world.

One site that provides a very healthy range of products waiting to be personalised by your images is Inkies (www.inkies.co.uk). Based in Suffolk, you can visit its colourful online store and quickly order a product for yourself or perhaps as a present.

The quality of printing is very impressive, with rich colours and faithful reproductions of the original. The company can print up to 100% full bleed, so none of your information is lost. And customers will benefit from a sublimation print process, where ink is applied to specially prepared items and then fixed by heat and pressure. This makes the prints extremely durable and pretty much indestructible. Which is perfect for the type of printing we're looking at here – printing to ceramic tiles.

You can send a photo to be used on one tile or across a few, and then use them to create tile murals in your kitchen or

bathroom, or maybe as part of a mosaic tabletop. Another idea is to use them for tiled counter tops. Of course, you may like your image tiles so much you might decide to just frame them as a normal print!

In this tutorial we're going to show you how to work your way around the Inkies site and order yourself some tiles. The same process applies to any other products on the site, and you get to choose from T-shirts, mugs, mouse mats, cushion covers, placemats and jigsaws, among other items. If you do fancy having one of your images transferred to ceramic tiles, see the opposite page for details on how you can win some.



ORDER FROM THE INKIES WEBSITE

Watch the products flood in

Expert Tip



The Inkies website homepage features a top banner with the text "Creative Printing for ALL". Below this are sections for "Personalised gifts for birthday's, father's day, mother's day, anniversary, valentines or special occasions... that looks in the right place for you." and "Baseball caps". A central image shows a baseball cap with the text "PERSONALISED BASEBALL CAPS". Other sections include "Personalised Mouse mats" and "How to order". A sidebar on the left lists "Products", "Friend Clothing", "Clothing Catalogue", "How to order", and "Our Other Sites".

A screenshot of the Inkies website showing a dropdown menu under the "Products" tab. The menu items listed are Logos, Design, Shop Signs, Baseball Caps, Mouse Mats, Ceramic Mats, Shower, Glasses, Kids Clothes, Workwear, and a TEE SHIRT FTERNS section. The main page background shows a baseball cap and some text about personalised gifts.

A screenshot of the Inkies website showing a section for Ceramic Tiles. It displays several examples of tiles, including a checkered pattern, a portrait, and a landscape. A "SAMPLE" link is visible at the bottom of this section.

A screenshot of the Inkies website showing a "How to Order" section. It includes a message from the team, a "SAMPLE" link, and a "Send us your file" input field.

03 The tile choice As you may have guessed, if you want to order some tiles you need to click on the Ceramic Tiles link. Once you've done this, be sure to click on the Sample link. This will take you to a page that has more specific details about how the tiles are made and what you can do with them.

A screenshot of a "Print Order Form" from Inkies. It includes fields for "Name", "Address", "City", "Country", "Post/Zip Code", "Mobile Phone", "E-mail", and "Home Phone". There are also checkboxes for "Phone T Shirts", "Phone Pole Banners", "T Shirt with Head", "Polo Shirts with Head", "Candy Head", "Mug/Promo Mugs or Table Mats", "Cushions", "Mouse Mats", and "Ceramic Tiles". At the bottom, there are fields for "How many do you require?", "How can we contact you?", and "By E-Mail" and "By Home Phone" checkboxes. A note at the bottom says "You can also E-Mail us at info@inkies.co.uk".

04 Your order To start the ordering process, you need to click the How to Order tab at the side to open up the options. You can access the FAQs from here in case you have any queries, but for now click the How to Order link. There's no online ordering available, so you need to order via email or by post.

06 Print a form If you don't fancy emailing your order, click the Print Order Form link from the How to Order options. This will bring up a form you can fill in and print. Post it with a cheque to the company and wait for your delivery. You'll be emailed with a sample of the finished product before the order goes ahead so you can make sure it's what you want.

02 The products Although you get a taste of what type of products the site offers from the home page, you need to click on the Products tab to get to see the whole list. Once you've clicked it, a list will drop down with the product options.



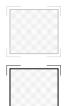
05 In the resize zone If you go the email route, you need to make your image under 5MB, otherwise the site's servers won't accept the file. To make sure your image isn't going to break the limit, open it up in Photoshop and go to Image>Image Size. If it does need to be altered, put what you've learnt in our resizing feature to good use!

Win! A set of tiles

Enter our competition

If you like the idea of owning your own set of ceramic tiles, enter this competition! Inkies has kindly offered one reader the chance to win a set of six tiles. Just send us the image you want to use, along with a few lines about what you're going to do with it. If your entries are under 2MB you can email us at PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk or post us a CD. Closing date for entries is 13 April 2006.

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Visit the advice centre for help in fixing photos, solutions to your image-editing problems and directions to helpful destinations on the web

advice

Your expert panel...



GEORGE CAIRNS

A Photoshop user for many years, George can tackle any problem



ZOE MUTTER

The newest member of the team, Zoe is a whizz at quickly correcting photos



JO COLE

The net is awash with helpful sites, and Jo brings you the best ones out there

What you'll find in this section



Q+A

Get to the bottom of your image-editing woes in this part



PHOTO FIX

Send us your problem shots for advice on making them all better



RESOURCES

We guide you to the best websites for tutorials and instruction in using the Photoshop software

Send your questions to...



Post your questions to *Photoshop Creative Q&A*, Imagine Publishing Ltd, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6E0.

Alternatively you can email us at PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk.

advice

Q+A

Let us sort out your image-editing quandaries

In perspective



My question concerns perspective control. How do I adjust the perspective of a tall building to stop the verticals converging? In the days of film and prior to Photoshop, a photographer would have to go out and buy/hire a perspective control lens or purchase a very expensive plate camera. There is a correct and incorrect way to do it, and I was shown the correct method at a lecture I attended – but then quickly forgot! I look forward to any help you might give me.

Malcolm Lewin



Adjust a picture's pixels using a variety of techniques to correct a tall building's converging verticals

A When you shoot a tall building from below, you have to tilt up your camera to get the top of the building in shot. The building's vertical lines then converge towards a distant vanishing point. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because the converging lines can help increase the shot's sense of depth. However, if you want to display a building more faithfully you can straighten those tilting verticals in a variety of ways.

Before Photoshop was around to save the day (yes, there were indeed such dark and terrible times), photographers could avoid the problem of converging verticals by using a shift lens. This rotating wide-angle lens enabled you to shoot the building without tilting the camera upwards, thereby avoiding the converging vertical phenomenon.

Luckily we can correct our vertically-challenged building shots in the digital realm, saving us the expense and hassle of fiddling

around with complicated hardware. We'll show you two ways to correct a problem shot. The first will work in any version of Photoshop.

Open your photo (we worked with the picture that Malcolm sent us), and Press F to edit in Full Screen mode. This gives you a grey work area around the shot and hides any desktop clutter. Double-click the image's thumbnail in the Layers palette to unlock it. Go to Edit>Transform>Perspective (or in Elements go to Image>Transform>Perspective.) A bounding box will appear around the edge of the shot. At the corners of the box you'll spot little selection handles. Click on the top-left corner handle and drag it to the left. The right-hand corner handle will move in the opposite direction, stretching the top of the picture and making it wider at the top than the bottom. Keep dragging the handle until the sides of the building are running parallel with the edge of the frame. Hit Return to apply the changes. You might

Tip



Find a layer's edge

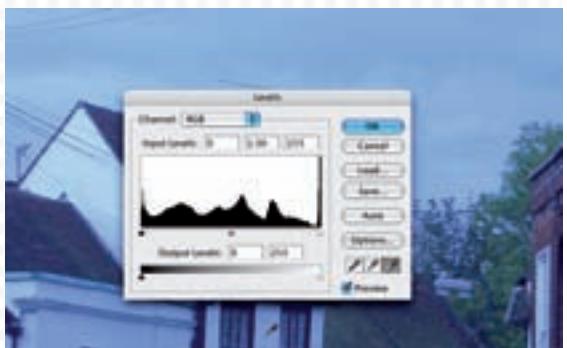


To see the edges of your current layer, pay a visit to the View menu and go to Show>Layer Edges. A blue border will now appear around your selected layer.

Quick colour casts

One click is all it takes

Photoshop boasts plenty of tools to help remove colour casts caused by incorrect White balance settings on your camera, such as the Photo Filter. A lesser-known but highly effective one-click technique is lurking in the Levels dialog. Pick the Set White Point eyedropper and click on a tinted object that should be white. Photoshop will remove the colour tint instantly. Elements 4.0's new Remove Color Cast tool works in a similar way.



NOTES | DON'T FORGET TO VISIT OUR ONLINE FORUM, WHERE YOU CAN POST PROBLEMS AND HELP OTHERS



KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Painting keys

Increase brush size
Decrease brush size
Paint or edit in straight lines
Erase to History



PC



Mac

]	[]	[
Click, Shift+click	Click, Shift+click	Click, Shift+click	Click, Shift+click
Alt+drag			Option+drag

need to go to Edit>Transform>Rotate to tweak the shot a little to get its verticals truly vertical. However, widening the top of the building to make it match the width at the bottom might cause it to look squashed. If this occurs, press Ctrl+T (PC) or Apple+T (Mac) to bring up the Free Transform tool. Use the middle selection handle at the top of the bounding box to stretch the photo's pixels upwards to restore the building to its full height.

If you're using CS2, Adobe has created a posh front-end that does a very similar job. Go to Filter>Distort>Lens Correction. This opens up the Lens Correction filter's interface, and there you'll find a Transform section. Two sliders allow you to adjust either Vertical or Horizontal perspective. To straighten out Malcolm's picture, we set the Vertical Perspective slider to -30. We also used the Angle wheel to rotate the shot a little, and slid the Scale slider to 111% to hide transparent edges that appeared at the bottom of the shot. The advantage in using the Lens Correction filter is that it has the Perspective, Scale and Rotate transformation tools under one roof.

Transform by numbers

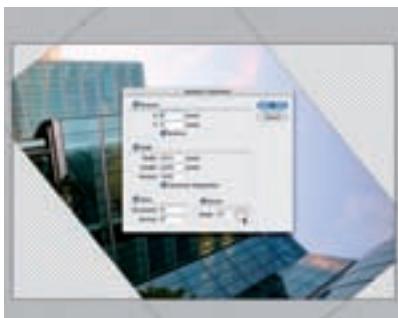
I use the Transform tool to rotate layer content, and like that you can drag the tool's central origin point to make the transformed layer pivot around any point. I want to be precise about the position of the pivot, so I can rotate multiple layers from the same point. Any suggestions? Paul Crosswell



The key to precise transformations is located in the Options bar. Press Ctrl+T (PC) or Apple+T (Mac) to activate the Free Transform tool. The tool will automatically offer to transform the layer's content from a central reference point. As Paul says, you can drag that reference point to any location in the Transformation bounding box and rotate the layer content around the point's new location.

For more precise transformations, you need to do things by numbers. Near the left of the Options bar you'll see an X and a Y box. These contain the reference point's location coordinates. X defines the reference point's horizontal position and Y defines its vertical position. By typing values into the X and Y boxes you can relocate the reference point with numerical accuracy.

If number crunching isn't your thing, check out the little grid to the left of the X and



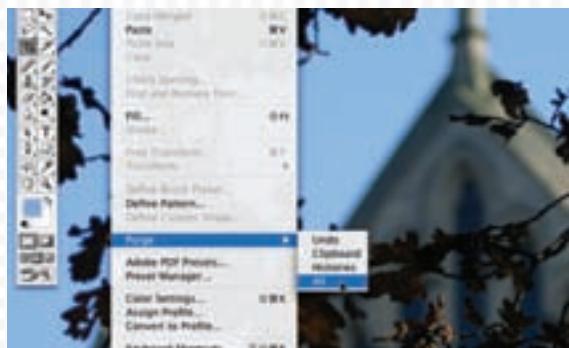
Use numbers and the X and Y axes to get some extremely accurate object rotation



Performance tip

Time for a purge

When unleashing some of Photoshop's pixel-pushing filters, the package gets hungry and hogs as much of your PC's processing power as it can get. To stop the Filter Progress bar chugging onwards, free up as much RAM as possible by going to Edit>Purge>All. This removes data floating around in the clipboard and empties the lists' History states, enabling Photoshop to focus entirely on applying your chosen filter.



LIGHT BEAMS

Create 'god-rays' with gradients

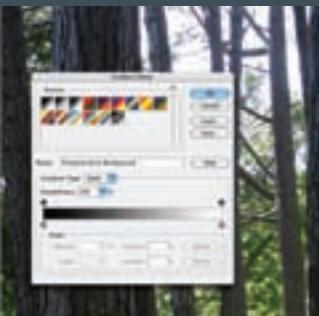


Is there an easy way to create multiple beams of lights radiating from a light source such as the sun? I want to fake the effect of beams of light being broken up by tree branches.

Morris Henderson

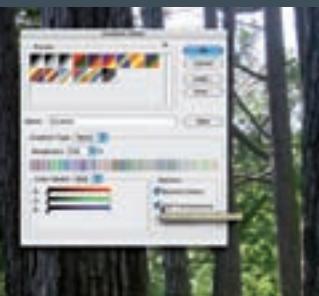


Directors like Ridley Scott are forever flooding their sets with smoke particles so they can capture beams of light that add texture and a sense of magic to a scene. With a quick rummage in the Gradient Editor, we can come up with a suitable digital equivalent of this attractive effect.

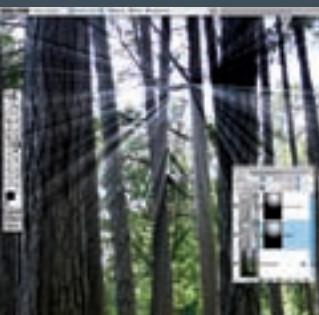


01 Groovy gradients

Open your source file. Ideally you'll be able to see the sun in the shot, so you can make the light emanate from the right part. Select the Gradient tool (G). Go to the Options bar, hit the Gradient Editor and set Gradient Type to Noise.



02 Rough it up Increase Roughness to 100%. Tick Restrict Color and Add Transparency. Hit OK. Pick Angle Gradient; draw a gradient on a new layer. Go to Image>Adjustments>Desaturate, then Image>Adjustments>Equalize. Set the blending to Overlay.



03 Beam me up Duplicate the Beam layer to accentuate it. Use the Gradient Editor to restore the Gradient tool to a foreground to background gradient. Add a layer mask to each Beam layer. Draw a radial gradient on each mask, and the beams will fade out at their edges.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Swift selections

Draw straight lines
Add to selection outline
Hide extras
Reapply last filter

PC

Alt-click with Lasso tool
Shift+drag
Ctrl+H
Ctrl+F

Mac

Option-click with Lasso tool
Shift+drag
Apple+H
Apple+F



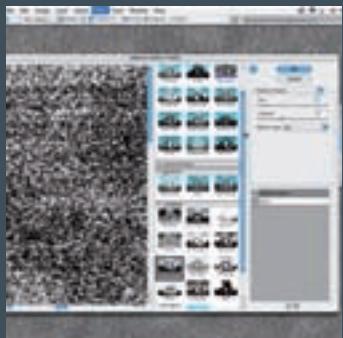
DIGITAL DELUGE

Kick up a storm

Q I'm trying to fake the effect of a person striding through a storm. Obviously this would be too tricky to shoot for real, so how can I alter a shot taken on a sunny day and make it look like something from *Wuthering Heights*?

Amy Malting

A Thanks to a combination of several Photoshop filters and some clever layer blending techniques, we can turn on the taps and give our subjects a soaking without the need to turn brollies inside out or give our friends and family pneumonia!



01 Get cloudy
Open your source file and add a new layer. Go to Filter>Render Clouds to create a texture for the rain. Now go to Filter>Noise and set a value of 120. To add clumpier chunks of noise go to Filter>Halftone Pattern. Set Size to 2, Contrast to 17 and Pattern Type to Dot.



02 When it rains...
To create sheets of driving rain go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set an Angle of 41. Set Distance to 107. To increase contrast go to Image>Adjustment>Equalize. Duplicate the Rain layer and apply Filter>Distort>Ripple to buffet the rain with wind. Set the first Rain layer's blending mode to Screen.



03 Cool things down
Set the rippled Rain layer's blending mode to Overlay. Reduce the Opacity of the Rain layers to 20% to make the effect subtler. Create an overcast look via Image>Adjustments>Color Balance. Drag the Yellow/Blue slider towards the blue.

Y boxes. This consists of nine boxes, each representing a position in the Transform tool's bounding box. Click on a box to turn it black. The Transform tool's reference point will jump to the appropriate position in the work area.

You can also use the Options bar to rotate your entire layer in precise increments. This is handy if you're creating multiple frames in an animation for example, and want to make an object rotate smoothly. An alternative (and easier) way to rotate a layer with numerical accuracy is hidden inside ImageReady. Click on the Edit in ImageReady icon at the bottom of the Toolbox. Now go to Edit>Transform>Numeric. This will open a dialog box that lets you rotate an object by dragging a little wheel or typing values into the Rotate box. The Numeric dialog box also contains boxes for you to control all the Transform values that live in the Options bar in an easier-to-use interface. You won't find the Numeric transformation box in Photoshop itself, so it's well worth making a sideways trip into ImageReady for easier transformations.

Terrific titles

Q Now that Photoshop CS2 has incorporated ImageReady's Animation palette into the main Photoshop interface, I use it to create title sequences for my home movies. I'm doing a spooky short and want to make the letters in the credits pulse with an eerie glow. Is there an easy way to create this animated effect? Tim Dale



Create an X-Files-style animated title sequence for your videos by animating Photoshop's Layer Styles

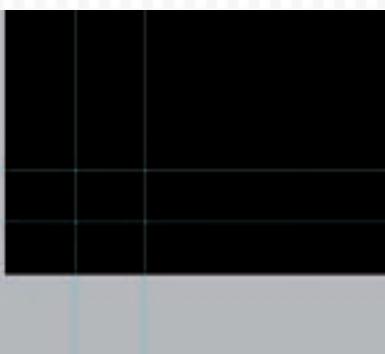
A The fact that Photoshop CS2 can animate your files and output them to an attached camcorder is a very exciting development for video makers. As well as animating the position of an object on a layer, Photoshop can also animate a layer style. For glowing ghoulish text, first go to File>New. In the New dialog box go to Presets and choose a TV resolution preset such as PAL D1/DV, 720 x 576 (with guides). This will make sure your text fits a standard TV screen. Click OK to create a blank document. The blue guides are very handy, as they define the safe area of a TV screen.

Edit>Fill the background layer with black. Set Foreground Color to White. Select the Horizontal Type tool (T) from the Toolbox. Choose a suitable font (we went for Herculanum) and set the size to 72. Type in your chosen text.

Hide guides

When you don't need the Extra help

In the 'Terrific titles' question above, we talk about using Photoshop's blue guides to help create a title sequence. These guides are part of Photoshop's set of Extras, meaning they are there to help you with your design but they won't print out. If they distract you from your work or you want to see a clean version of the image simply press Ctrl/Apple+H.



Preference tip

Q Apart from the Zoom tool's magnifying glass, you can add another zooming option to your repertoire by going to Edit>Preferences>General (Photoshop>Preferences>General on a Mac) and then ticking Zoom With Scroll Wheel.



KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS Colour commands

Fill with foreground colour
Fill with background colour
Reset default colours
Swap foreground and background colours



Alt+backspace
Ctrl+backspace
D
X



Option+backspace
Apple+backspace
D
X

Go to Window>Animation to activate the Animation palette. This will contain a thumbnail of frame 1 showing the present state of the Layers palette. Go to the Add a Layer Style icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and click on the Outer Glow option. Change the colour of the glow from a default yellow to a ghostly green. Click OK to apply the Layer Style.

Now click on the Duplicates Current Frame icon at the bottom of the Animation palette. Double-click on the Outer Glow effects icon in the Layers palette to edit the text's glow attributes. Set the Spread to 20% and increase the Size to 49% to make the text glow with a vivid green. Click OK to apply the changes for frame 2. Target frame 2 in the Animation palette and click on the Tweens Animation Frames icon at the bottom of that palette. In the Tween dialog box tick the Effects parameter. Set it to Tween With Previous Frame. Add 12 Frames. Play back the animation and the glow will gently fade up around the text.

To make the glow pulse in a loop, select frame 14. Click on the Tweens Animation Frames icon and set to Tween With First Frame. The glow will now fade up and down in a loop that will cycle forever, enabling you to export it to a camcorder and then edit into a program using packages like Adobe Premiere or iMovie.

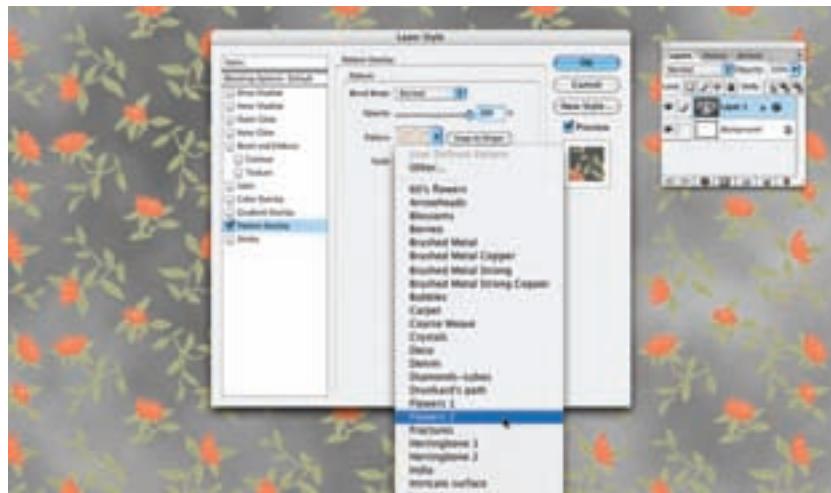
Perfect patterns

 I'm interested in using Photoshop to design wallpaper to liven up my PC. Is there a good source of patterns you can suggest? I've explored

all the patterns available in the Pattern Overlay section of the Layer Blending Modes window. Are there any others hidden away? Crawford Templar

 Because patterns are designed to tile, they will fill any size or shape document you have open. A good way to get to know the patterns available is to create a selection using a Marquee tool. Then go to Edit>Fill and choose the Pattern option in the Fill dialog box. There's a Custom Pattern icon you can click on, containing a variety of default patterns. Click on the little arrow to

get a pop-up menu that allows you to load in themed patterns such as Artists Surfaces or Nature Patterns. If you have CS2 there's another source of patterns hidden away. Click on the Edit in ImageReady icon at the bottom of the Toolbox to open your document in ImageReady. Pop across to the Layers palette and click on the Add a Layer Style icon. Choose Pattern Overlay. This style works the same as the Photoshop version, but is packed with dozens of new patterns. You'll be able to wallow in pattern heaven, apply your pattern to the open document and then return to Photoshop to continue editing your design.



Pillage ImageReady's secret stash of patterns to create graphical content in seconds

Online Resources

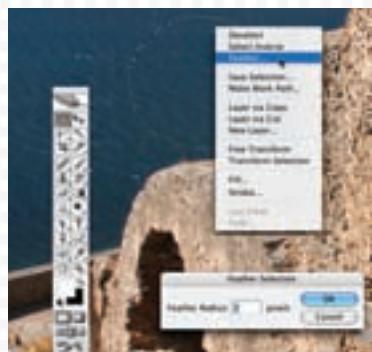


If you are having problems hunting down the perfect photo or texture, make sure you pay a visit online. There are a host of sites offering free goodies – just do a search for 'free textures' or 'free stock photos' and Bob's your uncle!

Fine-tune selections

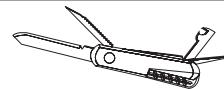
Adding a bit of polish

Making selections using the Marquee tools can be a fiddly business. Once you've made a selection you can move it around using the Move tool. Alternatively, move the marquee on a pixel-by-pixel basis using the arrow keys. To change the Feather value of a selection after you've drawn a marquee, right-click on it to get a pop-up menu. Choose Feather from the list of options.



Cool cropping

A few tricks of the trade



If you want to crop a shot but keep it at the same aspect ratio as all your other pictures, press F to go to Full Screen mode. This will give you a grey border around the image. Press C to activate the Crop tool and select the whole image. Then hold down Shift to constrain the aspect ratio of the Crop tool's marquee while you crop out the unwanted elements at the edge of the shot.





PHOTO FIX

Send in your troublesome images for us to fix...



Send your problematic photos on a CD to:
Photo Fix, *Photoshop Creative*, Imagine Publishing,
Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH2 6EQ

Unfortunately we cannot return CDs

Create selections with Channels

With a little help from the Levels dialog, Channels can be used to quickly select an area



Channels come to the rescue when you need to select an area with speed. This may not be suitable for isolating every type of object from its background, but if you have a prominent foreground element it's definitely worth considering. Channels work particularly well for selecting an area from the image we used, where the background is not

a flat colour and can't be easily selected using the Magic Wand. This method is also ideal here because it's quicker than tracing around intricate areas using the Lasso. With this image it was easier to make a selection of the background, inverse it to select the foreground then copy it, ready to be placed on another background image. Of course there are many selection methods, but this is another string to add to your bow.



This image is perfect for the Channels method as the background is not a flat colour

PHOTO BEFORE

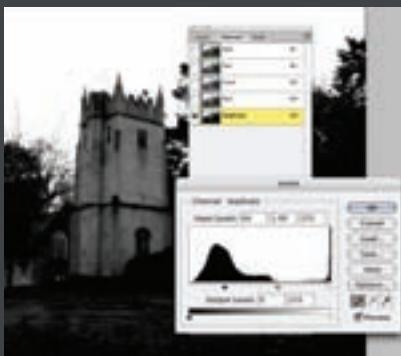


PHOTO AFTER



A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO COMPLEX SELECTIONS

Give the Magic Wand a wide berth



As easy as
1, 2, 3...

You can use your keyboard to quickly view a channel by pressing Ctrl (PC) or Apple (Mac), and then choosing the 1, 2 or 3 number keys. This will walk you through the Red, the Green or the Blue channel.

01 Find the right channel Open your image and go to Window>Channels. Click through the channels to see which has the best contrast and will make it easy to select the area you want. In this case it's the Blue channel, as we want to select the blue sky background. Ctrl-click (PC) or Apple-click (Mac) on Blue Channel. Pick Duplicate Channel to create a copy.

02 Handy Levels With the new channel active, press Ctrl+L (PC) or Apple+L (Mac) to bring up the Levels window. Using the white-tipped eyedropper, click a mid-grey point in the sky. All pixels lighter than this will change to white. Now, with the black-tipped eyedropper, select a dark-grey area from the foreground and all darker pixels will become black.

03 Finalise the selection Once out of the Levels window, click the RGB channel to bring up the original image. Ctrl-click (PC) or Apple-click (Mac) on the duplicate channel to load it. The background you created using Channels/Levels appears. Go to Select>Inverse to select the foreground. This can be cut or copied and placed on a different background.



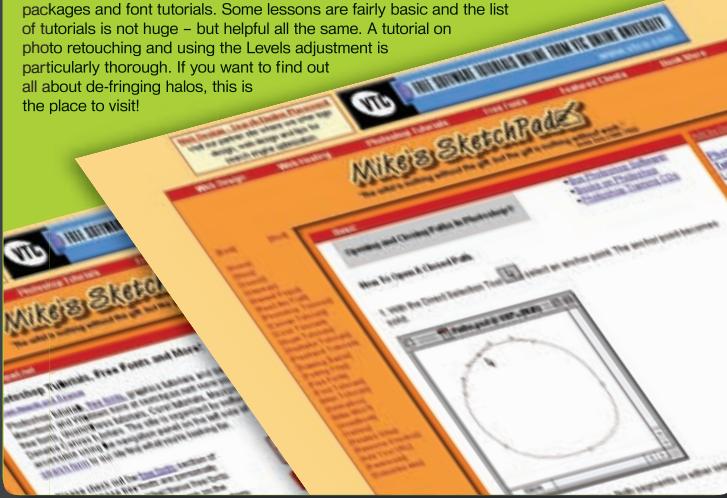
RESOURCES

You can never know enough about the vast subject that is Photoshop...

MIKE'S SKETCH PAD

www.sketchpad.net

Covered in this site are topics such as working with layers, working with Channels, creating and using textures, using the Pen tool, making clipping paths and special effects. A further very interesting and useful section for those new to software such as Photoshop is the Mastering Illustration Programs in the Drawing Basics section. This sector takes you through many of the fundamentals common to drawing programs (including Photoshop, Illustrator and FreeHand), such as vector anatomy, predefined shapes, keyboard shortcuts and Pen tips. You'll also find a selection of free fonts for Mac or PC, tutorials for other software packages and font tutorials. Some lessons are fairly basic and the list of tutorials is not huge – but helpful all the same. A tutorial on photo retouching and using the Levels adjustment is particularly thorough. If you want to find out all about de-fringing halos, this is the place to visit!



WEBCLASS.RU

www.webclass.ru

This is an online learning club, with tutorials divided into Basics, Text and Layer Effects, Image Processing, Drawing Techniques, Animation, and Web Graphics and Automation. A lot of information is included here, from retouching photographs to text effects. The largest area within the Photoshop sector is Drawing Techniques, with nearly 90 tutorials. The Web Graphics area is more limited but still manages to teach some useful techniques such as how to create a button, slicing and how to create a web gallery. If you have knowledge you'd like to share, you can join the WebClass.ru team and become one of its writers.



CORE FX

www.corefx.net

A few of the tutorials featured here are not very extensive, but still definitely of use. A lot of them are also quite random, such as one to remove the eyes from animals or people. Included in the Text section is pixel text or how to make text from pictures of your choice. The list of patterns you can create is worth looking at, especially the explanation of how to create TV scan lines over photos or artwork. The tutorials are split into Patterns, Basic Skills, Text Effects, Basic Renders, Advanced Skills and Photo Manipulation. The Fonts section is packed with different styles of font such as Pixel, Script, Famous and Techno. There was a two-month wait between the updates on Core FX, but the team now assures us it's been putting a lot of time into the site. The site's main purpose is to teach others how to create digital art, and therefore it caters for all abilities.



SPOONO

www.spoono.com

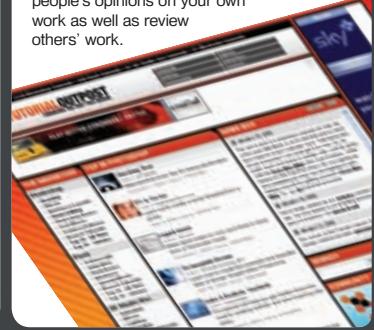
The tutorials on this site cover a range of subjects, and are written in an extremely easy-to-follow style for both beginner and intermediate Photoshop users. The lessons not only include special photo and text effects, but also basics such as keyboard shortcuts and screen modes. The texture effects listed here are particularly nice to look at, including water, sandy metal, rusty and grunge textures. Commonly searched-for subjects such as using paths, lighting effects, creating custom brushes and ageing documents are also squeezed in. Further Photoshop-related features of the site include sections on Brushes, Actions, Styles and Textures, as well as a discussion board.



TUTORIAL OUTPOST

www.tutorialoutpost.comphotoshop/

With over 2,300 tutorials dedicated to Photoshop, this site is impressive. It's partly a search engine of other tutorial sites, but also features many lessons that are original to Tutorial Outpost. The section featuring the 20 best tutorials submitted in the last month and also the 20 best tutorials ever submitted is definitely worth looking at. We recommend you join the Tutorial Outpost community, as this site is so vast you're sure to gain a lot from it. In the Community section you can get other people's opinions on your own work as well as review others' work.



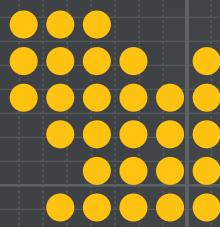
MY JANEE

www.myjanee.com

Bursting with Photoshop tutorials, this site also features a community where people can discuss digital art, photographs and software. The creator, Janee, also runs a small graphic arts business, and the site features not only Photoshop tutorials but also art challenges and Janee's own gallery. A particularly useful resource found in the Photoshop Links section is where Janee has compiled five different sets of tips from the newsgroups. The tutorials are split into categories including Photo Art, Photo Fixing and Retouching, Textures and Special Effects, Lettering and Text Effects, Brushes, Tools and Shapes.







creative reviews

The section that deals with those extra purchases that can help you get more from your Photoshop experience



Hardware reviews

Epson Stylus Photo R340	82
Fujifilm F11	84



Book reviews

Black and White	86
Adobe Photoshop CS2 One-Click Wow!	87
Photoshop CS/CS2 Breakthroughs	87
500 More Digital Photography Hints, Tips and Techniques	87

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HARDWARE

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Print high-quality photos not only from your computer but directly from a digital camera or memory card with the Epson R340...

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WEB

www.epson.co.uk

PRICE (SSP)

£149

OPERATING SYSTEMS

PC and Mac

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Windows 98SE, 2000 or XP

Mac OS 9 and OS X version 10.2 and higher



DETAILS...

Take a closer look

It's irritating when you have to spend ages setting up and working out a printer's controls. But you'll find that's not the case with the Epson Photo R340...

**Affordable**

For under £150 this photo printer includes a host of features to enable the printing of professional-looking photographs at an affordable price.

**Ease of use**

With economical running, quality printing and easy-to-use functions, this printer will deliver each and every time.



This is a printer that will instantly appeal to the home user looking for quality finish, but does it offer anything more?

Well, it was quick to set up, and all functions and menu buttons were self-explanatory and easy to use. It includes the apps Easy Photo Print and Print CD, which let you print onto paper or inkjet printable discs. In addition to cyan, magenta, yellow and black, this six-ink model also has light cyan and light magenta ink cartridges for more realistic colour printing. Each replacement cartridge costs nearly £12, so you may think it'd be expensive to replace them all. However, because each colour is a separate cartridge, you only have to replace a single cartridge when it runs out – not the whole lot. You can easily check if any cartridges are due to run out using the on-screen display which shows if the cartridge needs replacing.

Physically, the most prominent feature of the R340 is the 2.4-inch colour LCD screen on the front which enables you to print

without having to turn on your computer by selecting your images from other hardware devices. The screen also lets you preview, select, edit and print your photos using the simple menu and navigation. It's even possible to select options such as borderless printing. The LCD screen is useful for scrolling through and managing the printer's setup, and performing routine maintenance like print head alignment and cleaning nozzle heads. Another feature is the USB port on the front, which a PictBridge compatible digicam can be plugged into. Housed in a small compartment over this port is a

**Print professional-looking CDs and DVDs**

The CD and DVD tray slots into the printer, and the Print CD software helps you create designs combining image and text to print to special discs.



multi-format card reader which accepts Secure Digital, CompactFlash, SmartMedia, Memory Stick and xD cards.

We printed A4 colour images on Epson's Premium Glossy paper. The Easy Photo Print software is divided into three stages: Select Photos, Select Paper and Layout, and Print, making it easy to browse folders and locate photos you want to print, then choose paper size, type and quality of the print. In the final stage you can also select whether the images are borderless and how many images you want on a page. The photo can then be moved, rotated, enlarged or reduced. The printer resolution is 5760 by 1440 optimised, and this explains why print quality is impressive and colours so rich. Our photos had real depth to them, with crisp detail. They looked particularly professional printed on the glossy paper and set to best quality within the software. The speed of the printer was average at about three and a half minutes for an A4 print on glossy paper, and it printed very quietly.

When converting the printer to print directly onto printable CDs and DVDs, we found it was just a case of slotting the guide tray into the printer. The Epson Print CD software was equally as straightforward to use in choosing a background image, applying text and adjusting settings such as border diameter. Instead of printing onto labels then sticking them to your CDs or DVDs, the R340 prints directly onto special inkjet printable discs. A problem with many printers with this feature is that they're not properly aligned, but the Epson printed from edge to edge, with an aligned border.

This printer is ideally suited to home digital photographers who don't want to print solely from their computer and would like the option to locate and print images directly from their

EASY TO OPERATE

With a multitude of features at an affordable price and prints of exceptional performance, the Epson R340 has a lot to offer

All at the touch of a button Easily select photos for printing and manage your printer's setup from the colour LCD screen.

Multiple connectivity option Insert your memory card or hardware device, such as your digital camera, directly into the printer.



digicam, hard drive or CD and DVD writer. The ability to insert a memory stick or card directly into the printer certainly is a huge time-saver, as you don't even have to involve your computer in the printing process. If you want to adjust your image's brightness, contrast, saturation or framing, this can all be done using the LCD screen. Although the screen is handy, it's sometimes even easier to use the software provided, simply because it's so well structured. Another useful feature is the backup function, found by navigating through the menu on the

LCD screen, enabling photos on the memory card to be backed up to the printer.

Before you rush out and buy the R340, it's worth noting that a USB cable to connect your computer to the printer's USB 2.0 port isn't included. Essentially, this is a great home printer for family photos or holiday snaps, mainly due to its affordability, ease of use and speed of set up. However, it's not just suited to printing holiday snaps, and would cope well with more professional photos or graphics, with the bonus of printing them directly onto CDs and DVDs.

PROS

- Outputs photo prints of high-quality colour
- 2.4-inch colour preview LCD
- Prints directly onto CD or DVD
- Economical due to six ink cartridges

CONS

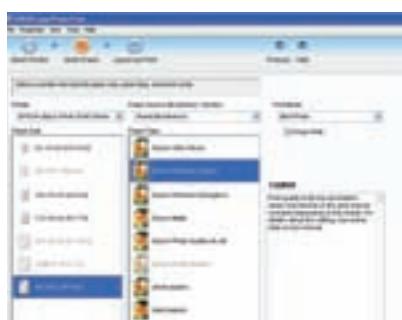
- Slight banding in some areas of the shadows
- No USB cable with the printer

VERDICT

8.5

Ideal for home users wanting fast, good quality photo prints. Affordable, with the bonus of printing to CDs and DVDs.

"THIS PRINTER IS IDEALLY SUITED TO HOME DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO DON'T WANT TO PRINT SOLELY FROM THEIR COMPUTER"



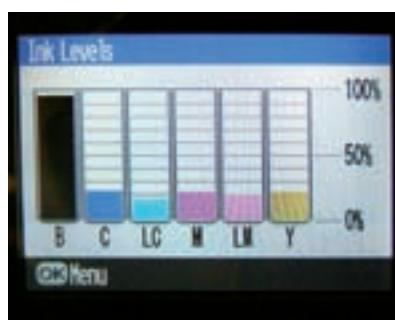
Easy Photo Print

Epson's Easy Photo Print software makes selecting photographs, paper and layout a simple and straightforward task.



Direct from camera to print

The options to offload photos directly to the printer for output include the port to connect a PictBridge-compatible camera and the media card slots.



See it all in colour

Navigate through your images with the menu buttons and manage your printer's setup, all from the 2.4-inch colour LCD screen.

HARDWARE

info

COMPANY

Fujifilm

BUY IT FROM

www.fujifilm.co.uk

PRODUCT

Fujifilm F11

PRICE

£279



Quality counts The 6.3 megapixels housed in the F11 means you get decent-sized pictures.

Small wonder The compact casing of the F11 makes it the ideal model to take along to any event.

Fujifilm FinePix F11

Impressive automatic controls coupled with smart compact housing makes this camera a winner, whatever level of photographer you are



IN FOCUS

The F11 up close



The Lithium-ion battery is charged directly within the camera, which is something you'll either love or hate.



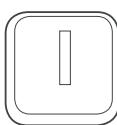
The 3x optical zoom lens won't disappoint with its results, and delivers clear and colourful images time and again.



The d-pad control is easy enough to use and provides shortcuts to common settings, but it is a touch on the small size.



The Mode dial that sits at the top of the camera allows you to flick between auto and manual functions.



If you use Photoshop to create images, you need a camera that delivers quality results so you can use the photos in whatever projects you fancy.

You need a camera that's easy to use, reliable and doesn't need its own fleet of luggage to cart around the various lenses and extras. If this sounds like your list of requirements, cast your eyes upon the Fujifilm F11.

This good-looking compact is the perfect model for anyone who needs quick and impressive results. The 2.5-inch LCD screen gives you plenty of room to review your shots and delete as necessary, and offers clear and crisp resolution. As is the norm with compact models there's a 3x optical zoom, but for most jobs this will be up for the task. Once you add in the 6.3 megapixels, you have some leeway to zoom in more using Photoshop.

Although this is a compact camera, there are plenty of manual options for getting the exact exposure you want. Pick from Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority and full Manual using the Mode dial at the top of the camera, or make

use of the shortcuts on the d-pad to change aperture and shutter or access flash options and macro settings. But if you'd rather give the manual route a wide berth, there are full auto settings, including the Fujifilm Natural Light technology for shooting in low-light situations without the flash. This makes the camera an effective point-and-shoot affair. We found this worked well, resulting in sharp images that would have otherwise suffered from blur. This level of image quality was present in all of our tests. When going for a wide-angle shot, there was no barrelling, and the macro mode didn't disappoint. Colours are beautifully reproduced and sharpness is impressive. We did have a few problems with the auto-focus and found that it missed the subject on occasions, but the manual focus works like a dream. The camera is very fast to get going – it's ready for shooting in about a second so you don't miss anything.

This really is a great model for Photoshop users who want to build up a collection of images. There are a couple of glitches, but on the whole the quality of shots and range of manual options makes this a great choice.

PROS

- Loads of manual control
- Excellent image quality

CONS

- Auto focus a bit random
- 3x zoom may leave you wanting more

VERDICT

8.0

A good all-rounder that delivers quality photos time and time again



BOOKS

Black and White

Packed with ways to achieve understated and beautiful black-and-white photographs


**TOP
OF THE
PILE**


Colour isn't always best. An image can be just as powerful – sometimes more so – when it's taken in black and white. This book reinforces this to those who've forgotten the influence black-and-white photography can have in a design world that's often abundant with colour. Suitable for anyone new to this area of digital photography as well as those wanting to extend their skills, this book shows you how to push black-and-white photography to its limits.

Following recent trends in design and advertising, *Black and White* also features an interesting case study on Silhouette. Simply admiring the beautiful images will make you want to get out there and start putting the techniques into practice. Using large, impressive images, this book is highly artistically and creatively oriented.

From the selection of different types of images, Michael Freeman tries to illustrate that details in a photo can be better appreciated in monochrome. The techniques covered aren't limited to basic concepts of black-and-white images, but also converting colour to greyscale, applying effects using Photoshop, and printing and displaying your work. Also mentioned are plug-ins such as Mystical Tint, Tone and Color produced by Auto FX Software, which allow you to get even more from your image. Another very effective technique covered is hand colouring black-and-white images in Photoshop – including selective colouring, where just one element of a monochrome image is coloured and sometimes produces an even greater impact.

Many areas of this book are quite in-depth and it will delight photography enthusiasts.

info
AUTHOR

Michael Freeman

PRICE

£17.95

PUBLISHER

Ilex

ISBN

1-904705-57-X



All stages of the workflow Even the latter stages involved in producing exceptional digital monochrome images are covered, such as the best type of printer and paper to use.

Extreme contrast Case studies such as this one on silhouette, aim to show examples of the different ways that black and white can be used.



MAKE THE MOST OF MONOCHROME

Discover how black and white can work for you



In-depth discussion The book suggests various ways to approach colour completely. When converting to black and white, it's vital to understand colour basics and how to judge colours.



Confidence with colour Don't forget colour completely. When converting to black and white, it's vital to understand colour basics and how to judge colours.



Suitable plug-ins A vast range of plug-ins is available to enhance black-and-white photography and create effects, such as adding age.



Tackling challenging areas The entire range of Photoshop's extensive features is covered, including how to get the most from the Channels.



Concepts of colour conversion The best techniques and things to avoid when converting colour images into black and white are all covered.

NOTES | LET US KNOW IF THERE'S A TYPE OF PHOTOSHOP BOOK YOU'D LIKE US TO REVIEW – JUST EMAIL PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

Adobe Photoshop CS2 One-Click Wow!



Why make design more challenging than it needs to be?

This book is a little bit different to most of the books we review here. Rather than investigating a certain Photoshop style or technique, it acts as a catalogue for the presets found on the accompanying CD. As you may have gathered from the title of the book, these allow you to achieve effects in just one click, which is great for creative sorts who are pressed for time. There is a vast range of presets on the CD for transforming text, graphics and photos. But the ones we liked the best were the Tool presets that enable you to turn an ordinary photo into different media. In addition to showing you what's on the CD, the book also demonstrates how to combine presets for even more choices.

info

AUTHOR

Jack Davis

PRICE

£21.99

PUBLISHER

Adobe Press (in association with Peachpit Press)

ISBN

0-321-24644-6



Includes Tool presets and Texture styles The brush presets (such as the Art History brush presets) save you time creating your own and can be reused to create a range of effects.

ONE-CLICK WONDER

Create that special look the quick and easy way



Simply install and you're away The professional appearance of the layer styles on the CD is impressive, and they're all easy to install.



Plentiful patterns With well over 150 patterns thrown in, you'll find that you have more than enough for all your creative projects.



Easily explained Tutorials in the book explain how to install the presets and styles, and then apply and customise them to suit your work.



Graphic presets The styles are not simply limited to photographs. There are also plenty to apply to text as well as graphics.

info

AUTHORS

David Blatner and Conrad Chavez

PRICE

£17.99

PUBLISHER

Peachpit

ISBN

0-321-33410-8

Photoshop CS/CS2 Breakthroughs

Succinct and sensible solutions to all your Photoshop problems

For quick, easy answers to difficult queries, look no further than this title. David Blatner and Conrad Chavez have tackled common problems Photoshop users encounter and skills they'd like to acquire, and compiled them into a manual of not too scary a size. Not only is it ideal for solving image-wrangling problems, but it's also a source of inspiration, suggesting techniques you may not have considered. Split into manageable sections, this book leaves no area uncovered. It's suitable for all levels of ability, tackling topics ranging from Photoshop essentials to keeping colour consistent. The to-the-point approach saves wading through pages of text to find a simple solution. The entire workflow process is covered, all the way through to the right way to print and export your images – and hundreds of solutions to common Photoshop dilemmas are offered. The layout makes it an approachable read, balancing text with visuals and handy hints. The question and answer format is ideal for covering the main areas of Photoshop, while also suggesting hypothetical situations where you may encounter them. Longer descriptions and examples are provided for more complicated topics, but the book mostly sticks to the principle that if something can be explained in a paragraph rather than a page, then why not do it?



500 More Digital Photography Hints, Tips and Techniques

Enjoyable to browse through while increasing your digital photography expertise



een digital photographers will enjoy this book, which is packed with hundreds of techniques to improve your digital photos. And it doesn't forget to mention Photoshop throughout. The glossy pages and vast amount of images make it a great handbook, and each tip is brief but informative. If you need ideas, simply dip into it at any point. You don't have to be a skilled photographer – it aims to widen your knowledge so you can get the most from your digicam. Techniques covered include correcting lens problems, shooting in poor weather and shooting panoramas. The basics of digital photography are explained and its advantages over traditional methods, plus terms you'll encounter when printing images. Author Philip Andrews is a pro photographer, and shares his knowledge in a highly accessible format. The tips are categorised into sections, and the book covers enhancing images using computer apps and correct printing methods.

info

AUTHOR

Philip Andrews

PRICE

£12.99

PUBLISHER

RotoVision

ISBN

2-88046-831-0

Exhibit



Issue five's challenge seems to have tickled your mystical bones, with ruins and faeries and all sorts of goodness!

We have to be honest – we weren't too sure how you would work with the images provided for issue five's challenge. After all, they were hardly inspiring scenes. A couple of sky pictures, some leaves and an old ruin were what you had to work with, and we were intrigued to see what you would come up with. Well, once again you delighted us with your submissions, proving that you can take pretty much anything and produce something great in Photoshop. All it takes is a bit of time and a lot of imagination.

The ruin seems to have prompted a few fantasy scenarios, but there was plenty of room for humour as well. Just have a look at the afro creature on the opposite page! It's also good to see how some of you are using our tutorials in your challenge entries – well done to Mike Berry for his space creation.

And of course, well done to Dan Allenby-Byrne for snapping up the prize. We loved how you transformed the ruins to create your own landscape and also gave the sky an other-worldly feel. There will be a copy of Fluid Mask winging its way to you soon, so you won't have to spend so long cutting things out!



Get your work featured

If you'd like to share with other readers, send it in to us and you could be featured on these pages. Just pop your images onto a CD and send to:

**Exhibit, Photoshop Creative, Imagine Publishing,
Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH2 6EQ, UK**

Alas, we can't return any CDs. If your entry is under 2MB, you can email it to PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Dan Allenby-Byrne

A Witch's Welcome

"Upon buying issue five, I thought I'd have a go at your challenge. I chose to stick to the images provided, except the witches (my two lovely daughters dressed up for last Halloween) who finished the fantasy feel I was looking for. The image just developed on its own. Thoroughly enjoyable it was too."

James Beer

Fantasy



"This is by far the most complex image I have undertaken. The background was made from the photos provided, while the effects were painted in. I hope you enjoy viewing it as much as I enjoyed creating it!"

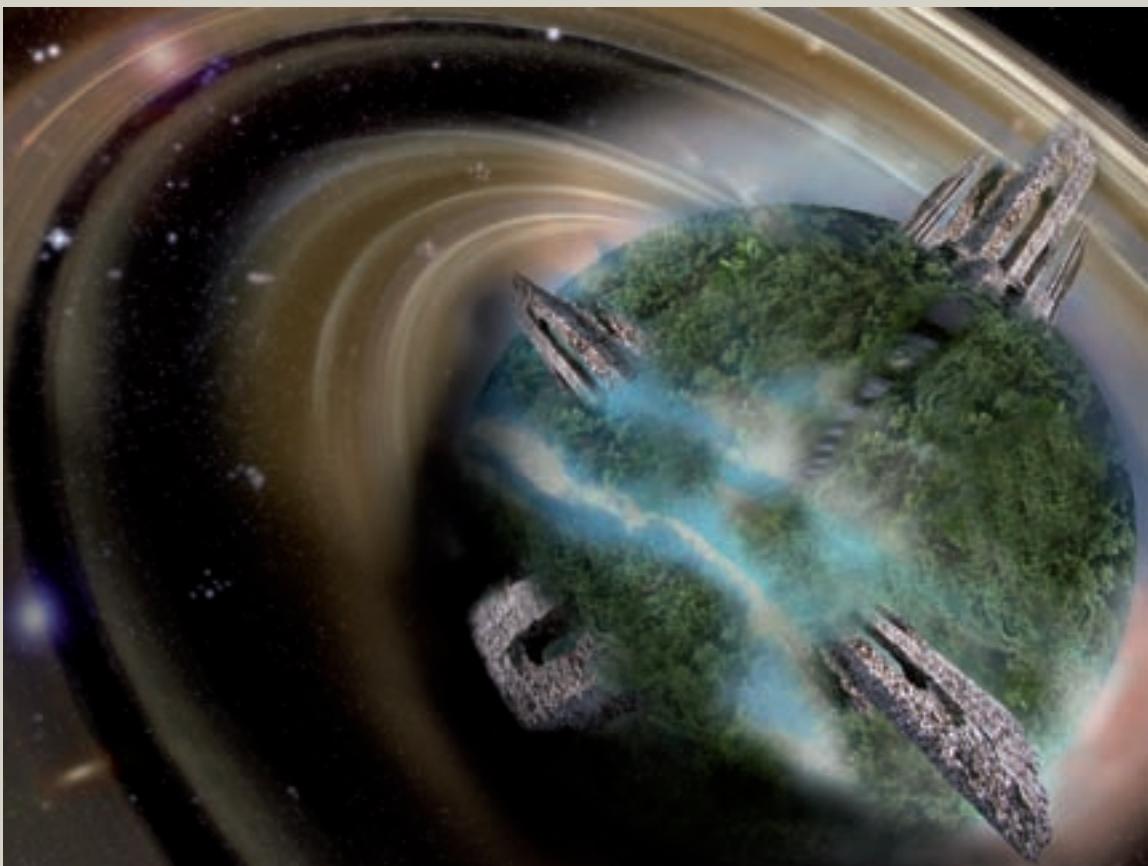


Darren Mundy

Margo



"Taking the supplied images and trying to be as creative as possible, making them into something almost unrecognisable from the originals. If I were to give this character a name it would have to be Margo – don't ask why, she just looks like a Margo. Do you agree?" Yes.



Mike Berry

Planet Quatracastelle

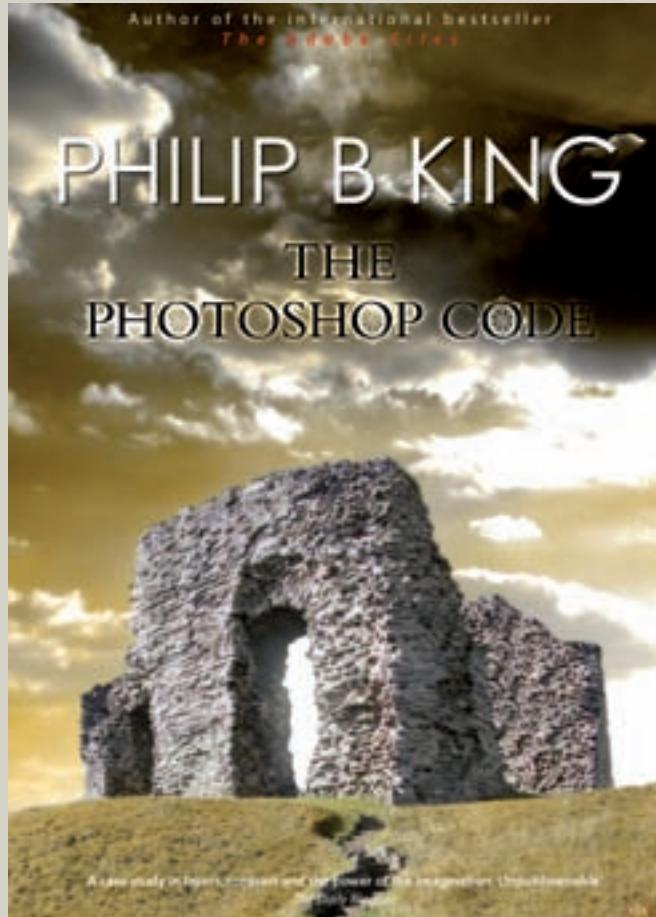


"I loved your article on space creation and decided to have a go myself. I thought it would be fun to create a planet using only your images, so I copied parts of the view with a lot of trees in the foreground, duplicated them and made them into a circular shape."

Exhibit

Michael Macari
Untitled

 "As a photographer, it's great to stumble across ruins – and in Photoshop, it's great turning those ruins into something bigger. Here, it was a case of stacking, distorting and using the Clone Stamp."



Philip King

Book Cover

 "The idea basically is a mucky-take on *The Da Vinci Code*. I got the idea from the ruin picture supplied, as it reminded me of the story. The idea was to create a moody landscape based on those dreamy book covers you see nowadays with the ruin as a focal point."

Mic Hoe
Untitled

 "Well, I've just spent a whole day playing with Photoshop for the first time. So here I've come up with something for the Readers' Challenge. Not particularly good, but close at least to what I had in mind!"

NOTES | TRY OUR READERS' CHALLENGE THIS MONTH – TURN TO PAGE 98

Turn to page 98 and enter this issue's Readers' Challenge

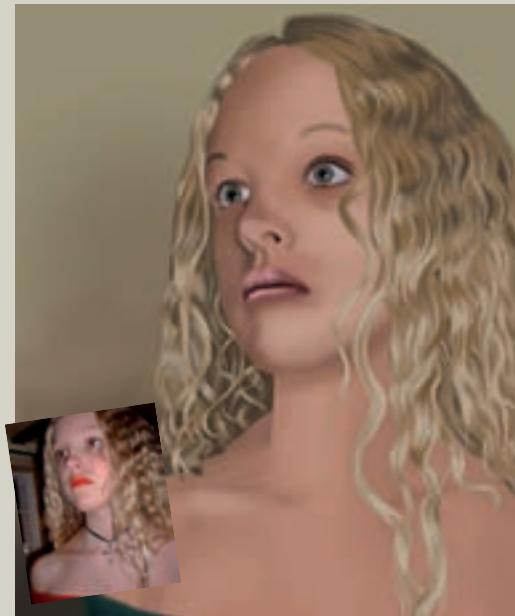


Malc Crooks

Night Wish

"For this challenge I used your photos and a photo of my daughter playing dress-up. The idea was to make it look like it was a clip from a movie, about a young girl trying to cast a spell that will bring her true love safely home from overseas. But her spell attracts the attention of a dark spirit who lives among the ruins..."

I have also included an attempt to paint my daughter using Photoshop; I am quite pleased with how the hair turned out."



George Powell

Aztec Jungle

"I noticed there hasn't been any photo montage in the Readers' Challenge, so thought I would have a go. The hardest bit was extracting all the plants and getting the colours to match. Hope you like it."



Cat Woods

Untitled

Unfortunately the creator of this image didn't supply any text about how or why they created the image, so it's up to us! We liked the contrast between the leafy approach and the modern structure, and thought the rainbow gave the perfect overall mood to the image.



WIN!
FLUID MASK
PLUG-IN
WORTH
£179

Enter our
challenge and
see your work in
the magazine!

HOW TO ENTER

 Access the Readers' Challenge folder from the side panel on our CD and copy to your desktop. Once you've completed your masterpiece, send it to us on a CD along with your name, address and a few words about your creation, to:

Readers' Challenge
Photoshop Creative
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset, UK
BH2 6EQ

Readers' Challenge

Load up these images and try your hand at a bit of creative invention



t's good to see some regular contributors to our readers' challenge starting to emerge and we really enjoy seeing what you come up with using the new images supplied with each issue. This issue we have some prime imaging fodder for you to get your teeth stuck into, with a good selection of photos that lend themselves to all sorts of tasks. Maybe experiment with colour in some of the duller images, or extract elements of others to create a bespoke result. Some of you may fancy combining the images with fonts and patterns to try your hand at designing an invitation (page 66), or maybe use as a basis for an abstract piece of art (page 58). You might even apply the action created in the digital painting tutorial (page 38) to one of the photos and work on a lithograph poster in the Art Nouveau style. As ever, it's completely up to you what you do with them, and the crazier you go with them the better! These are just a few ideas to get the old brain cells ticking over.

NOTES | IF YOUR ENTRY IS UNDER 2MB, YOU CAN EMAIL IT TO US AT PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK. UNFORTUNATELY WE CAN'T RETURN CDS



Master montages

Turn to page 26 where we reveal a great way to present photos – as a montage mosaic. This technique works well with all sorts of images, from holiday snaps to portrait shots. Give the tutorial a go and see where it leads you...